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TIMES INTERNATIONAL

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RIMI: Unforgotten Hero

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OUTLINE

The unforgotten hero

A VERY controversial personality in the politics of the defunct Second Republic was former Kano State Governor, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi. When the Second Republic collapsed in 1983, his arrest, detention and subsequent trial was equally controversial. A school of thought believes he did not merit the conviction which was meted out to him.

Groups were formed which called for his release. All these were to no avail. But a few days ago, the Federal Military Government threw the prisons gates open for the man who created sensationalities in the politics of the Second Republic – Rimi.

In his home base, Kano, his release created tumultus crowd (his supporters) who hailed and cheered him over his release.

The mood in Kano tickled Times International's sensitivity which prompted them to unearth the charisma surrounding the personality in Rimi, his accession and fall from power, and what he is still made of after his three years prison sentence.

Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, released ex-Governor of Kano State

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IN THIS ISSUE

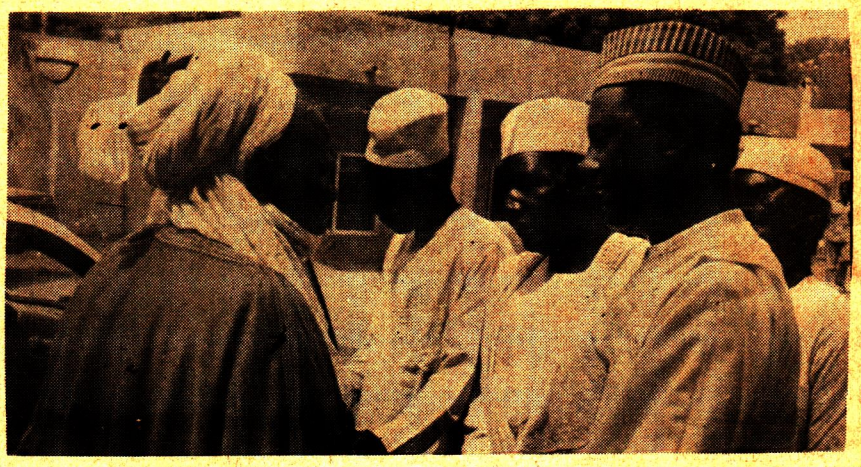
WE had planned a cover on Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar Rimi since March. This was as a result of the piece of information that filtered out from the grapevine. Our sources told us that he would likely be freed.

We sent a message to our correspondent in Kano, Mallam Idris Sule Idris, to get a comprehensive interview with him. He could not. His inability was not due to neglect. It was due to Rimi's absence. Rimi was not released as rumoured.

Then we kept the story on the shelf. But not for too long. The rumour again surfaced. This time as a surprise. A young man whose dress portrayed some trait of radicalism stormed the Times newsroom shouting "Rimi has been freed." It was Friday, October 6. Our last edition had gone to bed.

"Where is he now"? We questioned. "He has just been released from Kirikiri prisons and his relations have arranged a place for him at Sheraton Hotel, in Ikeja. His wife, Hajiya Sa'adatu, was about to leave her husband when the good news came", the young man disclosed. We once again went into action. Raheem Mohammed, a Times reporter was the only man on hand. He was assigned to interview him at his *Room 651* hotel apartment.

He came with little report. Reason? Rimi was not in a talking mood. He was not willing to say anything to the press. But he has to talk. If not, there would be no justification for a cover story. We had to look for other alternatives'. We succeeded at last.



Salisu Dan Na'inna, our chief correspondent in Kaduna was on hand. He had to break his annual leave to go to Kano. He got to Kano International Airport hours before Rimi's arrival. He watched Rimi's admirers take to the streets beaming with joy. He saw them chanting "Chanji. . . .Chanji. . . . Chanji."

At Rimi's ₦2 million Durin-Katsina Road residence, where he addressed a fullscale press conference, Salisu was on hand to record the event.

But he had more. An exclusive interview was arranged. Rimi spoke on domestic and national issues. He bared his mind on the ban of the old politicians. Talked of his three years experience in jail. But more importantly, he did not hide his feelings for being the wrong man in the dock.

With Salisu's report is the social and political write-up on the life of Rimi collated by Timesman Louis Okoroma. But one thing cuts across the reports: Rimi represents the interest of the "Talakawa". Truly, he is an unforgotten hero.

EDITOR

The glory of confinement

Kaodillinye Obiagwu

THE great wisdom in silence is that it is golden. But the great wisdom vanishes like dew in romance with the rays of an early sun if we quickly imagine the scenario of a Chinese proverb where the tongue and teeth will decay if the lips are sealed.

Or even the local proverb which educates that when one keeps quiet, one is carried past one's father's compound.

As a matter of fact, silence shuns the timidity of the man who keeps quiet in the face of oppression. That's why it is said that the man dies who keeps silent in the face of tyranny.

But silence is a virtue only when it is experienced in the search for a positive expression. The golden essence of silence is therefore an expression of a higher mental awareness.

The surface manifestation of silence is deafening. What is derived in silence is not usually in the amount of what gets said which is always a function of what is not said. This most often is tucked away in retrospection. A retrospection hinged on aloneness and seclusion.

In seclusion you talk less. You expend time. You think more and hide away in the depth of silence.

Jesus Christ, for forty days and forty nights, did remain physically silent and quiet.

For those odd days and nights, he sought solace in the vast wilderness. Physically, he couldn't overcome the wilderness. But he mentally embraced his seclusion and withstood the machinations of the devil. That Jesus prevailed over the devil's three biggest temptations and told the world that 'man shall not live by bread alone' reinforced the belief of numerous christians all over the world that the man certainly knew what he was doing.

When he emerged from the wilderness, he was a lot more wiser.

However, forced seclusion is no comfort at all and no matter the level of mental freedom one enjoys, one regrets. Nevertheless, there is the opportunity to get away from the soft reality of the bigger world where the dynamics of society sufficiently becloud reality. In seclusion, in prison, in solitude, issues fall into perspectives that offer a different course, a different approach to tackle the hubbub of living.

Alhaji Shehu Shagari, ex-president of the defunct Second Republic felt relieved in forced seclusion that he found time enough to study the Koran like he never did before.

INTERNATIONAL Illustration by Bayo Adetayo

For more than 30 months, Wole Soyinka spent his time in prison. He spited the discomforts of seclusion and kept his intellect busy enough to produce the epic ***The Man Died*** Ngugi Wa Thiongo of Kenya, incarcerated for his commitments found himself in a similar position. His ***Prison Notes*** proved a veritable testimony.

One discomforting thing about seclusion is that you get put away, (or you go away) for something you did, or you believe in, or for something you don't believe in. It is a consolation when one is jailed for what one positively believes in than for what ones gaolers stand for. Still a term in prison is not an experience anyone will honestly wish for. Going to prison represents a rejection by society. A punishment for crime. A period for repentance and deprivation.

It still remains an anomaly to social life. And no matter what one's convictions are, going to jail puts one in the Book of Guilts. It casts a halo of a convict, a deviant on one and society never quickly forgets that – whether justified or unjustified. Society never fails to twitch its nose at the ugly stench out of the prison and the ex-prisoner is never completely able to drown that feeling. For a committed humanist, a rebel, he comes out convinced more than ever that he owes himself the repentance and society an explanation.

The truth of the matter is that he has passed through a process – a social process.

The experience forces him to realise that the prison does not make saints out of devils. The prison is a school but it never teaches you to accept injustice. It never teaches you to oppress. It teaches you how society oppresses you. It teaches you what injustice is all about. It educates you on deprivations. The physical limitations and psychological hold-up never succeed in stopping that tickle that shows: you are still human.

For Abubakar Rimi, erstwhile governor of Kano State in the defunct Second Republic, going to prison probably was the last thing on his scheme. When he accepted that reality, it looked like a disguised Hijira for him. Nothing has changed.

In spite of the horrific pictures of prison painted by the Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Rimi might not be a classic graduate of Solzhenitsyn's ***The First Circle or Gulag Archipelago.*** But the dank corridors of the prison has not drowned the Essential Rimi.

LETTERS

FELA: I AM BROKE

YOUR cover story on Fela Anikulapo-Kuti came at a time when some of us were beginning to wonder what has been happening to that Music Maestro. That he is hard working there is no doubt. However, let the truth be said. The soldiers that burnt his "Kalakuta Republic" though acting under provocation, were not sent by the government.

AFOLAYAN MOSES
Surulere.

SO, Fela is broke! The saying goes that if you do not keep your money well, you deserve to lose it. For all that I personally care for, Fela may be paying the price for his bohemian life style.

DUMNODI PHILLIP,
Benin City.

AT 49, Fela is not growing any younger. It is now high time he looked back to see those things youthful exhuberance has made him do wrong. From all indications, this advice may fall on deaf ears. One only has to walk past his Pepple Street African Shrine to see some of his hangers-on selling anything from Maryurna to local brewed gins to the concomagement of the 'Baba' himself.

EARNEST UTUK,
Calabar.

DELE GIWA

I STILL refuse to believe that our Nigeria Police Force is so inefficient that they cannot even get a clue to hook the "King Pin" of such dastardly murder of Dele Giwa.

Who would want to lose his job or life in order to find the killer of another man? No one I can think of in Africa. Not even I or You, or Would You?

Dele Giwa is happier dead than live in a coward's world. So, he lives on in the lips and hearts of those who love truth and HONESTY.

SOLOMON O. ARABONOKHEMU,
Ikeja – Lagos.

IF the Newswatch, Communications has actually spent ₦22,640 (as reported in your Magazine) in the last one year for the upkeep of Dele Giwa's family, then Dele's mother could pass for an ingrate. Her complaint about negligence from Newswatch is baseless and I think the whole controversy exposes her as being greedy and opportunistic. Her surviving children, Tunde and Biodun Giwa in particular ought to call her to order.

AHMED BELLO,
Jos.

ONE would have thought the physical disappearance of Dele Giwa from the surface of the earth would have given his mother concern more than material things which she now misses as a result of the journalist's death (your magazine October 26, 1987 cover story refers).

Understandably she needs materials to remain alive and also to lessen the grief which Dele's death obviously caused her. But the way she is going now makes one think that she is thinking more about Dele's property than Dele himself.

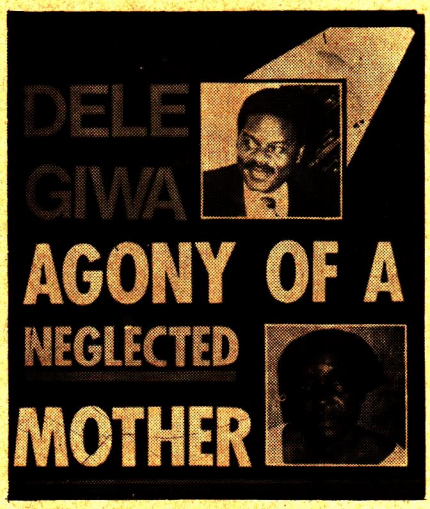
OGIDI-OLU,
Ibadan.

NIGERIANS in all walks of life know that Dele died in pursuit of truth. A man of rare excellence in his chosen profession. I was personally perturbed by the sudden demise of the brilliant writer of our time a year ago.

Dele, may your ebullient soul rest in perfect peace! May those who have assassinated you have no place in "Kingdom of God." I pray fervently.

By your murderer(s) yet to be found by the police, which we much rely upon, in deed, it's a total disgrace to the nation. Fondly remembered by.

JOSEPHAT A. ISHOKARE,
Mafoluku – Oshodi.



MEDIA WATCH

YOUR column 'MEDIA WATCH' of October 26, 1987, page 34 by Adams Aliu has drawn the attention of all true lovers of sports in Nigeria and soccer in particular. That column was a "lecture for other Journalists to adjust strictly to their professional ethics to justify their role to the populace."

I thank the EDITORIAL BOARD of this magazine and in particular for the piece and beg that the page for the media column be increase from one to two.

OZIOKO RAYMOND U.,
Government Tech. College,
Nsukka.
Anambra State.

MR. Adams Aliu in the November edition of your magazine informed us that Emeka Maduegbunam of the NTA "verdict" fame came on TV screens in 1979. To the best of my short memory, Maduegbunam featured in the infamous NTA verdict in 1983.

I have a feeling that Maduegbunam was still a student and in school in 1979.

James Peters,
Surulere, Lagos.

Mrs. E.A. Adeogun

Comrade Lougomba Basango

ERROR

The above pictures were wrongly placed in our PEOPLE's page last week. We regret the error.

THE cover story on beggars made an interesting reading. Your paper now is the conscience of the nation since you could draw the attention of the world to the plight of these men and women who live on charity. No one would really say that begging for alms is lucrative any more since the times are hard and givers are few.

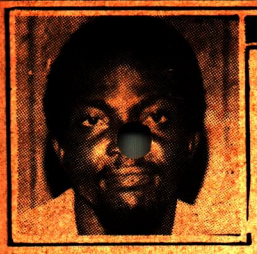
However, it is often said that it is the responsibility of government to cater for the welfare of its citizens, abled and disabled alike. The question therefore is: what is the government doing?

TONY OSUBOR,
Igbodo.
Bendel State.

EDITOR'S NOTE

ALL letters must be reactions to the contents of the Magazine and should be typed and addressed to the Editor, Times International, P.M.B. 21340, Ikeja, Lagos.

– Editor.



John Araka

Rulers from another planet

SOMETIMES one wonders how those in the bed-room of power take decisions. Ordinarily, they are supposed to be guided by the highest ideals; by what they perceive to be in the best interest of the greater majority. That being the case, a vital question they must always ask is: "How will our actions affect the life of the people?" They no doubt try to answer this question in all their deliberations. But somehow, their understanding of what is good for the masses does not often coincide with what majority of us, unschooled in the intricacy of governance, think.

Their decisions may well be "infallible". Moreso, when they are, to some extent, Plato's philosopher kings. They are the egg-heads who, imbued with altruism, spend 24 hours to think about how to better the welfare of their "less gifted" fellow citizens.

In Athens and other Greek city states, which acted as the maternity wards of modern day democracy, governance was not the exclusive preserve of any group. All the adults gathered in the city squares to debate any issue that affected their lives. Consensus or the wish of the majority was the criterion for decision taking. There was not much difficulty in proffering commonly acceptable solutions to their problems. The reason is not far-fetched. All of them lived in the same vicinity, experienced the same conditions and, for that, there was the collective determination to do things that would benefit all.

In most African states the conditions are, however, different. The rulers live in the GRAs. Their lights hardly go off; their water rarely ceases to flow; their roads scarcely get pot holes. When the governed complain of epileptic electricity, dry taps and bad roads, the governors, living in a different world, think that the problems are unnecessarily exaggerated. For them to know the true problems of those they administer, they have to embark on official tours of the region occupied by the masses. For an hour or so, they experience a semblance of the problems of the people and then return to their exclusive areas, where they are shielded from the difficulties of the commoners. Even those who have lived among the masses before, easily get assimilated into the GRA culture and, over time, forget their former plight as ordinary citizens.

To further transport rulers far away from the realities of their societies, they are provided almost everything free. The car is free. The fuel is free. Electricity is free. Water is free. Telephone is free. Plates and gas cookers are free. Chairs are free. Bed and bedsheets are free. Window blinds are free. Food, some of the time, is free. Name it.

In fact, they are just like people in another planet, an El Dorado. It is true that many of them do have a great capacity for empathy. But no matter how hard they try, their world of make-believe sometimes blinds them to the true conditions of the people.

Worse still, is that the plethora of security agencies that surround them and the iron gates of their walled-round residences (gilded cages) further isolate them from the people. Their few acquaintancies do not help them either. Most of their friends are the favour-seekers who know that the best strategy to get their lucre is to be outrightly, sycophantic. They tell the rulers that they are messiahs. That everyone in the country is pleased with their policies. That they are the best set of people to ever govern anywhere in the world.

Perhaps, the worst hit is normally the head of state. Most of his top aides are always praise-singers. They tell him only the things they think he wants to hear. Often, Africans relish sticking to power. And to do that they must be in the good books of the political head who has the authority to recruit and fire ministers, advisers, etc. The best way to achieve this, most of them think, is to always support the argument of the boss in all meetings.

As General Yakubu Gowon said in his last days in office, the shortcomings of any head of state are the products of bad advice from his top aides. By the nature of his office, no head of government can on his own truly assess the feelings of the people. Unfortunately, those that he depends on are often out of touch with the commoners as well. And even when they maintain contact with the people, they keep the truth to themselves. This has been the crux of African problem.

It is about time, therefore, to discard the GRA mentality which has been the barrier between the governed and the governor. Those in government should stop seeing themselves as colonial administrators who must exclude themselves from the "uncivilised" Africans. The colonialists created the GRAs to enjoy facilities they thought were luxuries for the Africans. Though most African countries became independent over two-and-half decades ago, those racist apparatuses of power are still in place. The impression the rulers have created is that independence is no more than black colonisers taking over from their white counterparts.

This should not be the case. Our rulers should come down from their olympian height of opulence and live with the people they rule. That means that the concept of GRA should be abolished throughout the continent as was done long ago in Libya by Col. Muammar Gaddafi.

Let official cars be scrapped so that rulers can buy their cars with loans like other workers. They should also buy their own fuel. Pay their own electricity and telephone bills. In fact, they should be treated like any other public servant. They should then receive their salaries and allowances and take care of all their needs. In this way, baring all forms of corrupt enrichment of themselves, they will wear the same shoes with the ruled. Then, they will know where it pinches. And with that, they will be better placed to take decisions which will be in consonance with the aspirations of most citizens.

The un

Rimi advances to take his seat in the plane

THE scenario was reminiscent of the good old days. A large crowd, large enough to fill an international sports arena, chanting slogans and singing praises of the man hey love had gathered. The crowd was uncontrollable, security officials had a herculian task controlling it.

At a point, the man, Rimi, was asked to go into the aircraft to allow the crowd to be checked. He said no. He said he was used to crowds, especially the crowd of Kano.

As he emerged from the aircraft, the crowd yelled in excitement at having him back in their midst. He was back, the unforgotten hero of his people.

It was said by the Aminu Kano Airport staffers that some of the people who welcomed him had been at the airport for more than 24 hours, defying the chilly harmattan cold to have a glimpse of their political idol.

Traders, market women, taxi drivers, artisan and more, who constitute the backbone of the supporters of the articulate politician, abandoned their daily struggles for livelihood, spending hours at the airport to express their unshaken solidarity for the released ex-governor.

That was the situation on Monday ctober 2, 1987, when Abubakar Rimi alighted from the Nigeria Airways plane that conveyed him from Lagos to Kano and to freedom.

Since January 1984, two months after the duo of Buhari and Idiagbon ended the life of the troubled Second Republic, Abubakar Rimi, former Chief Executive of Kano State has been in jail for alleged acts of impropriety and corruption during his stewardship as governor of Kano State. That may be why, so soon as he was released, his family took him quietly to Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja to freshen up and escape a while from the public.

Rimi's problem started on December 31, 1983 when he went to Jalingo to condole ex-Governor Abubakar Barde, who had lost his son in a motor accident. The December 31, 1983 coup reportedly caught up with him there and he was whisked away into protective custody.

forgotten hero

COVER STORY

He was later in 1984 to face a special military tribunal along with other Second Republic politicians on charges of corruption. Specifically, the ex-governor answered to two different charges under the Commodore Elegbede – led military tribunal. In the first, he answered to a charge of receiving gratification from the proprietor of Leedo Holiday Inn, Kano. The money was alleged to have been paid to the former governor to help the hotel obtain a certificate of occupancy for a piece of land the hotel needed for expansion.

The proprietor appeared before the tribunal as witness, but Rimi pleaded not guilty to the charge.

He was also charged for corruptly enriching himself and demanding the sum of ₦593,000 from Dantata Sabo Construstion Company being 5 per cent 'kick-back' of the contract sum of a road project as a donation to the defunct PRP.

He was tried and sentenced to 21 years imprisonment. But his counsel, Chief Lardner (SAN), leading seven other lawyers, said it was a gross misdirection of law and facts. Chief Lardner addressing the Justice Bello Panel reviewing cases of persons convicted under Decree 3 of 1984, said his client should be freed on that basis.

Rimi's jail sentence was however reduced from 21 to five years by the Bello Panel. By March 1985, the ex-governor was transferred from Jos prison to Lagos.

In 1986, several appeals were made in national newspapers by some prominent Kano State indigenes for the release of Rimi from prison but to no avail. The appeals went on up till 1987, when the convicted governor paid the surcharge handed him by the Federal Military Government.

In spite of the payment of the surcharge, ex-governor Rimi was still held behind bars, to the chagrin of many of his admirers. The Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs in a rather swift reaction, said the payment of the surcharge was no guarantee for his release.

Ex-governor Rimi was in Kirikiri prison twice – in January and May, 1984 and in October 1987. He spent 10 months in Kaduna prison and spent 25 months in Benin prison from where he was moved to Lagos shortly before his eventual release.

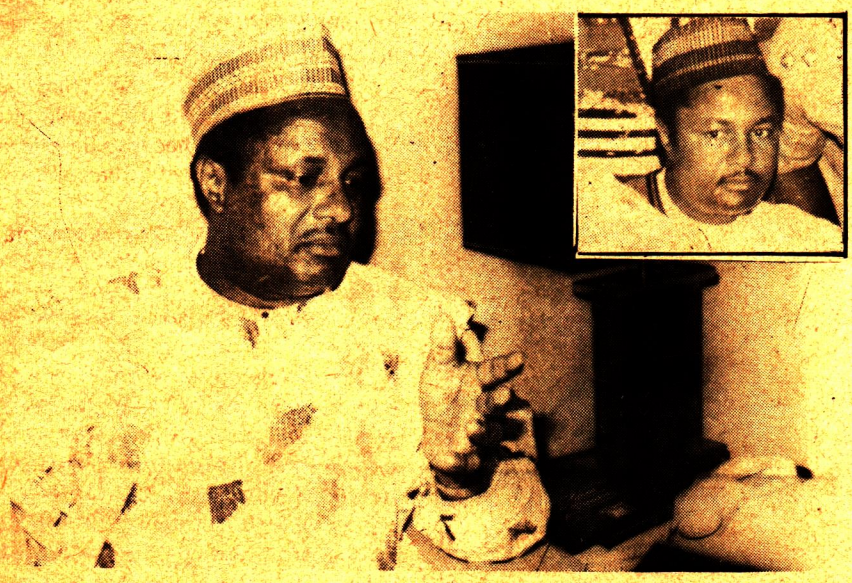
In his debut in politics, Rimi could point to significant achievements. Many would admit that the Rimi factor knocked the under-pinnings off the feudal set-up in Kano State and most parts of Northern Nigeria between 1979 and 1983.

For this, Rimi has been variously called a radical and a socialist. He acknowledges these and adds that he is a progressive. These could as well be true for one factor that irks his foes apart from his caustic tongue is that he was always a step ahead of the opposition. Some say these were natural survival instincts which he had to adopt as he vehemently opposed the Northern oligarchy and tried to emancipate the downtrodden 'Talakawas'. How did he do it?

Before Rimi came to office in 1979, there was forced labour. The village head could order people to go and work in his farm. People could also be ordered to carry the village head's load on their heads and backs from place to place. Besides, it was sacrilegious to oppose the system that taught that traditional rulers were divine representatives acting on behalf of God on earth. Rimi stopped all these and restored to the populace their freedom, dignity and abolished cattle tax which he described as oppressive and evil.

Even most of his opponents would concede to him, that his coming into power as Kano governor ranked as one of the best things that happened to Kano State with a population of 10 million.

Rimi in the middle of 1980 introduced a mass literacy programme as part of his rural development scheme, on a scale that had not been seen in that part of the country before. Rimi spoke of the motivating factors behind this. According to him, "When people are not enlightened, they would not be useful to themselves not to talk of the society. The people must be able to read and write, know their rights'



Rimi as governor

COVER STORY

and the constitution under which they are being governed."

Ironically, the reward of this programme was reaped by Barkin Zuwo who in his second month of office as governor was given the UNESCO medal and certificate for the mass literacy scheme. Rimi called this, political hypocrisy.

It was Rimi that established the articulate and bold Triumph newspaper with English, Hausa and Ajami versions. Also, the city television station he established helped him to propagate his education for the masses.

Other enduring marks he made while in office were in the area of water supply and electricity. As at the time he stepped into office as governor, only 20 towns in the state had water supply but this had been increased to 300 by 1983. At the beginning of the Second Republic too, only ten towns in the state had electricity supply. Among these, only Dawakin Tofa and Kano were connected with the national grid system. By the time he was leaving office, about 250 towns had electricity and the towns connected to the grid system had risen to 20

When the story of party formations would be told and retold, Rimi's name would always come out as the person who gave the People's Redemption Party (PRP) its name. He was convinced he is a redeemer and that made him plunge into politics in 1964 at an early age of 24, having resigned as a teacher. That attempt was a near disaster for various reasons. Firstly, he was in NEPU, a party opposed to the Northern oligarchy. Secondly, he was to fight against a stronger opponent, Inua Wada, who at one time rose to become Minister of Works and later Minister of Defence under Tafawa Balewa. He was arrested with his bicycle and posters and locked up until Inua Wada was returned unopposed. Rimi said he was lucky that he was only locked up because worse things happened to his friends.

Alhaji Rimi receives R. B. K. Okafor and his team.

Mrs. Sa'adatu Rimi, wife of former governor Rimi

However, ever since, in an attempt to redeem and fight against injustice, he had stepped on big toes. He was most vocal in the condemnation of the actions of the Shagari government such as the Bakalori riot, Shugaba episode and Revenue Allocation bill. All these earned him the tag of a confrontationist and someone who had no respect for elders. His criticism of Awo as a man who feels he is the best man in the world also earned him the same name tags.

In line with his self imposed mission of redemption, he raised three districts to the level of emirates and made their heads first class emirs. Explaining this, he said "we have here in Kano four districts which in the past used to be emirates totally autonomous of Kano."

He blamed the British administration for bringing these emirates under the tutelage of Kano.

Rimi left a trail in office that marked him out as a controversial figure in Nigerian politics. Who else would have given a query to an all powerful emir as he did to the emir of Kano? Rimi does not see anything wrong in this especially as he regarded the emir as an employee of the state. He is an advocate of the democratisation of hereditary rule which he finds most obnoxious and out of tune with the demands of modern life.

Rimi still claims innocence of corruption. In a chat with Times International in Kano, Rimi maintains that he was tried in secret and convicted without proving his alleged offence.

Though a law-abiding citizen, he feels no special indebtedness for his release. According to him 'my release from prison by the Federal government is not a favour to me because I was unjustly jailed in the first place

He accused those who slapped charges of receiving kick-backs on behalf of the defunct PRP on him of fabrication and bad faith. He saw no reason for thanking anybody for the freedom granted him, for according to him, 'I committed no offence'.

Fair-minded as always, Rimi told Times International that he bore no grudges against anybody and that he has left everything to God to judge. A calculating political realist, Rimi praises the general ban on all former political office holders including himself. He agrees with the present administration that the country needs a new set of leaders adding however that victory at the pools come December

1992 would be for the 'progressives'

In fact, recounting on his prison experiences, he said it was good and worthwhile. He has no regrets. He recommends the 'prison college' to all leaders and well placed Nigerians as, according to him, this would tickle their sensibilities to the need for prison reform and alleviation of the plight of the common man.

Before he went into party politics, Abubakar Rimi could be said to have been in politics but as an administrator of policy. This was when he occupied the prestigious post of Administrative Secretary of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos – the nation's think tank on foreign policy and external relations.

At the birth of political parties in 1978, Rimi's concern for the masses especially the people of his native Kano State as well as shrewd political calculation and realism saw him leaving his prestigious job of Administrative Secretary at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs to join forces with late Alhaji Aminu Kano, leader of the then newly formed and now proscribed Peoples Redemption Party, who since the dawn of party politics in Nigeria has been the chief political actor in ancient Kano and its environs.

Abubakar Rimi played a prominent role in the Peoples Redemption Party as he became the symbol for young party adherents and other radicals. For this reason, he was nominated as the party's gubernatorial candidate for the governorship elections in 1979. He was successful. At the end of the day, he was elected governor of Kano while another radical, Abubakar Barde, was elected PRP governor in Kaduna.

Ex-governor of Kano State, Alhaji Rimi, presents a literary certificate to a successful candidate.

Abubakar Rimi, prior to his election as governor of Kano State, also served in the then Constituent Assembly from 1977-78. A graduate of the Institute of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, the University of London and University of Sussex, Rimi was a foundation member of the defunct Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) where he was elected a deputy national secretary of the party.

In the 1979 elections, the Peoples Redemption Party achieved modest success while showing signals that it was a party to be watched.

In the 449-member House of Representatives, it won 47 seats while obtaining seven seats in the 95-member senate.

Of the now proscribed parties that contested the 1979 elections, the PRP emerged as the most clearly ideological and leftist. The party harboured some of Nigeria's pre-eminent old-guard, as well as new breed radical socialists like Sam G. Ikoku (PRP's national secretary) and the trenchantly articulate Uche Chukwumerije (National publicity secretary and others like Junaid Mohammed and Bala Usman).

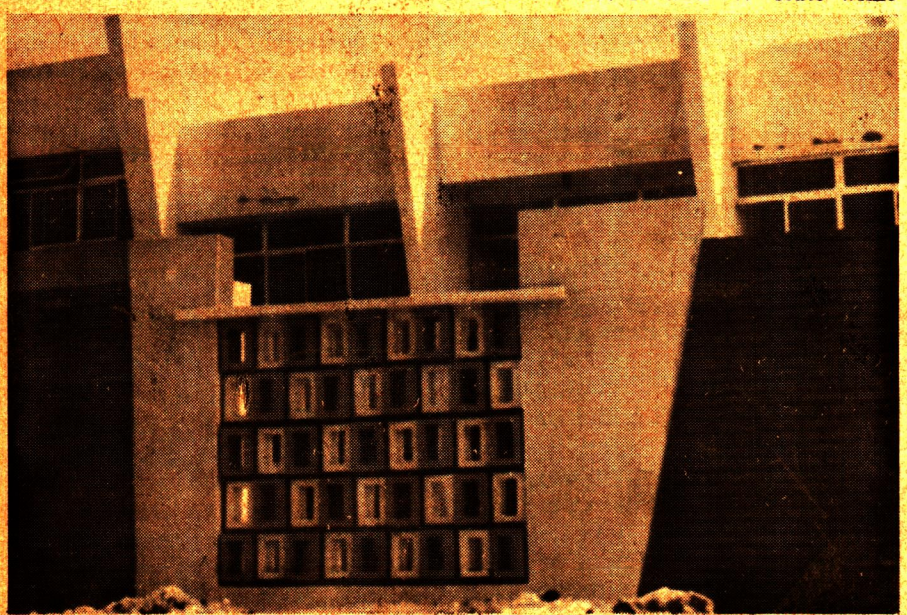
According to Rimi and other PRP supporters in those hey-days of the Second Republic, the PRP, was 'the party of the future'. The party though small in stature and acceptance, was supremely confident – a confidence engendered by committed young men like Abubakar Rimi.

A group of well-wishers led by former NPP (Nigeria Peoples Party) chieftain, Chief R.B.K. Okafor came from Imo State. The group said they brought good tidings from elder statesman, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe to Abubakar Rimi on his release.

Chief Okafor recalled the activities of the ex-governor in promoting national unity through the progressive governors' meeting and called Rimi a good leader.

Speaking also to Times International, a close associate of Rimi, Mallam Lawan Damazau said Rimi's release was the work of Allah and that no earthly authority deserved gratitude for the act. He cautioned aspiring politicians not to be deterred by the likelihood of going to jail.

By: Louis Okoroma with Maurice Ogar and Ndubuisi Ugbede with Salisu Naianna and Abubakar Abdullahi in Kano.



A part-view of ex-governor Rimi's ₦2 million mansion at Durbin Katina Road, Kano.

COVER STORY

Rimi explains some points

Rimi's Quotes

BELOW are excerpts of his statements and utterances when he was in Government, and after his release.

On Struggle for Change: "The struggle to bring about change is total and irreconcilable until the less privile ged people of the country regain freedom." (Nigerian Statesman, June 22, 1983).

On Trade Unionism: "The Trade Union Movement could not be transformed into a worker's vanguard for revolutionary struggle because its present form could not transform social and economic relations in the country." (Nigerian Herald, May 7, 1983).

On Feudalism: "It is very difficult for many Nigerians particularly those from the South, to understand the brutal influence of feudalism . . . . . the community and cattle taxes meant oppression, evil and corruption." (Sunday Concord, July 24, 1983).

On Social Justice: "Where we can no longer obtain justice even from the Supreme Court, only the Press and the Army will save the situation." Sunday Satellite, October 16, 1983) "Politics, though pervasive, should be dissociated from religion, tribalism and sexism so as to ensure speedy development in the country." (Nigerian Herald, September 15, 1983).

On (late) Chief Awolowo: "I love and have respect for (late) Chief Awolowo who is one of the leading statesmen this Nation has ever been blessed with and who is decidedly honest about his commitment to root out all forces of darkness, oppression, exploitation and opportunism in the country." (The Punch, September 7, 1983).

On Morality and Discipline: "To talk about morality and discipline to an unemployed person, is like preaching to the deaf, because all our social ills today may be traced largely to unemployment among other things." (Nigerian Herald, 24 November, 1981).

On His Personality: "I cannot be gagged or allow a mortgage of my conscience in order to satisfy the interest of any one." (The Punch, February 7, 1983).

On his Wife, Sa'adatu: "She is a nice, beautiful, loving, generous and dependable woman in the world."

On Prison: "If I have my way, I will send all our rulers – judges, administrators and even traditional rulers to prison to have a taste of prison life before they are allowed to rule.'

On His Gubernatorial Services: "I am proud of what I did all the time I was a governor of Kano State because I served the people with all my heart, power and energy."

On Army Rule: "What has the army got to do in the administration of a country? Can army take over government in Great Britain, America, France and other advanced countries where the level of education and political awareness is high?"

On Ban on Ex-Politicians: "I think the ban on old politicians is good in a way, because for a long time the country has been ruled by reactionary people who made it difficult and impossible for the country."

On His Experience in Prison: "It is good because I learnt quite a lot, things you cannot learn in any school."

Effect of Ban On Him: "I don't consider myself banned. The only thing is not to be banned by God and people."

Compiled by Abubakar Hashim and Emeka Nwosu

COVER STORY

Rimi bares his mind

EX-GOVERNOR Muhammadu Abubakar Rimi had an illuminating with Salisu Na'inna for Times International. Below is the text of the interview.

Times International: Do you still hold your political views of bringing social and economic changes to Nigeria?

Rimi: I still hold my views about everything strongly. I am still committed to changing the status quo.

Times International: How do you see the future of this country?

Rimi: Only God knows the future.

Times International: Do you hold grudges against anybody?

Rimi: No. No grudges. You see, if you engage in the kind of struggle I and my compatriots engaged, going to the prison is just a natural outcome. If you want to bring changes in the society, if you want to better the conditions of the people in the society, you find problems. These problems include going to prison and even getting killed. Lucky enough, we have not been killed. We have been to prison and back. We have graduated from the university of experience. It is a valuable experience. We will use this experience in the struggle when and only if the opportunity arises once again.

Times International: How do you assess the loyalty and general attitude of your political associates while in and now out of prison?

Rimi: Political associates have been very good. They have been with us all along. The masses of the people have been very sympathetic, very understanding, very kind and very generous to my family when I was away. One must also admit that there have been some black sheep, some ingrates, people who really were just opportunists and hypocrites and if this thing didn't happen, we wouldn't have discovered them. We now know how to move forward with them.

Times International: Do you think or believe that the Federal Government has done any favour to you by releasing you?

Rimi: No, No. The government has not done any favour to me. First of all, I should not be in prison at all. I did not commit any offence whatsoever. When I was taken to the tribunal I was not found guilty of anything. I was charged with receiving kickback for the Peoples Redemption Party, and it was not established before the tribunal. There was no exhibit and there was no evidence before the tribunal given by anybody who gave me money for the PRP. But remember that this is a military tribunal that tried people in secret under retroactive law. They did what they did and God has done what he has done and I am back.

Times International: But some of your associates gave evidence against you.

Rimi: Well, leave them to God. Whether they were forced to do so or whether they did it out of malice or they did it for the fear of those in power or the fear that if they did not give evidence against me they themselves would go to prison, whatever was the motive for their action, I leave them to God.

Times International: One of your sons, Abubakar Abubakar, has promised to go into politics. Would you encourage him?

Rimi: I would encourage everybody to go into politics, not only my children. You see, politics is just about the organisation of the society and you too are a politician (meaning the reporter) because you want to know how this country is being governed. You pay taxes, you want good roads, you want water, you want electricity, you want peace, you want development, you want progress and a good assurance about the future of your children. So everybody is concerned about politics. Everybody, every responsible person, should be concerned about politics.

Times International: How do you assess and rate the Nigerian press?

Rimi: The Nigerian press on the whole has been very good. And I think despite all the problems and decree 4, which God so kind is now dead, despite all the intimidation, I think the Nigerian press has lived up to expectations. They did very well, particularly during the Buhari regime when some journalists (Irabo and Thompson) had to be jailed. We were together in the prison. They were jailed because they wrote an ordinary story on the posting of diplomats, which was nothing. They were in prison for one year. But the press still went on with the struggle. The press will have to continue to fight for freedom and truth.

All other obnoxious laws should be removed. There are so many laws that should not be there. This administration as we understand respects fundamental human rights. It will conform with their human rights policy if they should abrogate decree number two. Decree two, which allowed people to be detained for flimsy excuses or no excuses at all, should be removed Decree number five of 1984, which gives death sentence to armed robbers, should be amended to make for an appeal. Now it does not allow for appeal. Once you are sentenced, you face your death. And believe me, quite a good number of those robbers did not commit any offence. Note that I have been in prison for four years and learnt alot there.

Times International: Any lesson drawn from the prison?

Rimi: I think you will see something to read about it in writing some time.

Times International: So, we should expect a book from you soon?

Rimi: I will not tell you my secret (laughter).

Times International: Any comment on the forthcoming local government elections?

Rimi: Remember that I have been banned.

Times International: Any message for the Nigerian progressives?

Rimi: Nigerian progressives should unite. Unity is the most fundamental objective. It is the greatest weapon. It is the rallying point. If the progressives will come together and unite, the future of the administration of this country will be in their hands and then there will be peace, progress and development in this country by the grace of God.

Its social problems

THE quality of human settlement in terms of housing in any area usually provides one of the most visible indicator of the level of development in any country hence, governments of various developing countries are striving hard to improve the quality and quantity of housing in order to attain the impressive standard already attained by most developed countries.

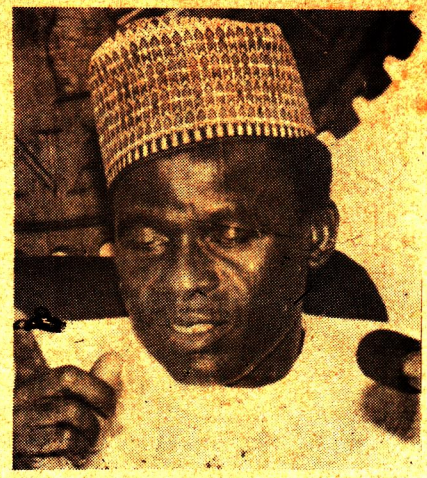
The provision of adequate housing is largely a socio-economic problem. In Nigeria, housing problem is essentially urban. No adequate arrangements were made to ensure that housing facilities expanded in line with the rapidly growing population. Consequently, rapid urban growth has seriously aggravated the shortage of dwelling resulting in overcrowding, slums and squatter settlements.

The politicisation of housing schemes especially at the federal level in the Second Republic has led to substandard housing units being constructed. Inadequate maintenance and low original technical standard are some of the problems easily identifiable with these housing schemes.

The housing problem in Nigeria is at both the household and national levels. At the household level, income determines the type of housing a family can afford In the national terms, income reflects a country's capacity for housing its population at standards which will not distort other investment allocations.

At the household level, because majority of Nigerians are in the low income bracket, the minimum requirements for decent living standards cannot be met. For at least, a basic family accommodation should comprise of two to three bed rooms, a shower bathroom, water closet toilet and a separate food storage or store. Rather than this standard, most houses in Nigeria are characterised by a varying number of rooms ranging between ten to twenty; lacking in adequate toilets, kitchen and other housing facilities. The toilet facilities are of poor standard. In fact high percentage of the population in this income bracket are served by the pail system, very small percentage can boast of water closet while most houses depend on public tap that may not be forthcoming. The effect of all these inadequacies is poor health condition. The environment becomes congested, overcrowded and this of course breeds communicable diseases and reduces family living standards to levels in which immorality, delinquency and filth thrive.

At the national level, government's involvement in housing would appear to be a curse rather than a blessing. Although the volume of capital required for urban housing and development is large and the capitalised period rather long, government's task of financing housing is not in any way a panacea for the housing problem. Equally important is the fact that the housing industry in Nigeria is at a disadvantage in the competition for funds in the capital market, for investments in other industries are usually of shorter duration than housing investments, hence financial institutions would always prefer investments other than housing to be financed.



Alhaji Abubakar Umar, Minister of Housing

Various governments policies at reducing housing problem in Nigeria have proved unsuccessful. And this goes a long way to saying that other means should be found. The recent rent subsidies being earmarked for university staff might be a right path to nipping the problem in the bud in the university community.

I is time government, be it at state or federal level hands off the direct involvement in housing schemes. Rather than continue to build estates only for the few rich in the society, government should acquire large tracts of land, lay them out and make them available for building owner-occupier houses.

– Amos Omoniyi

Nigeria/US sign law pact

AN agreement on procedures and modalities for mutual assistance in law enforcement matters was given a legal muscle recently when Nigeria and the United States signed a bilateral agreement pact.

The Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Prince Bola Ajibola, signed on behalf of Nigeria, while his counterpart Edwin Messe signed for the US at a special ceremony attended by Nigeria's Ambassador to the US Mr. Hamzat Ahmadu.

The agreement is said to be a preliminary step to a concrete treaty on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters between the two nations, and provides a legal framework for consultation between law enforcement officers of both countries.

Prince Bola Ajibola, Minister of Justice & Attorney-General

It was bilaterally agreed by the two countries that assistance under the pact "may include, but shall not be limited to taking the testimony of witnesses, obtaining documentary information, records, including bank, financial, corporate and business records, and articles of evidence from witnesses".

With specific regard to drug trafficking, the agreement provides for "executing of requests for search and seizure" as well as "seizing and profeiting the proceeds and instrumentalities of drug trafficking."

According to the agreement, the Ministry of Justice in Lagos and the Justice Department in Washington will serve as clearing houses of information on each party's policies and programmes relating to law enforcement.

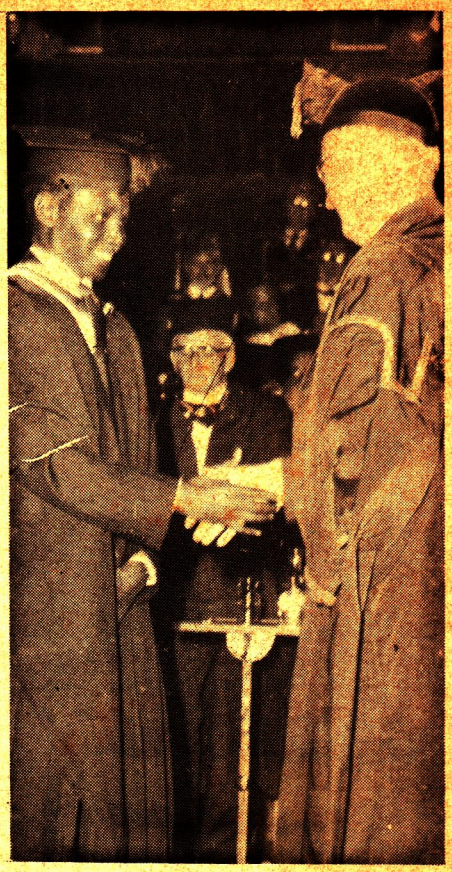
The parties are also expected to "ensure prompt presentation of an extradition request from the other party to the appropriate judicial authorities, upon receipt of the formal extradition request through diplomatic channels".

If properly abided by, the agreement will be a 'safety valve' in ensuring that criminals do not run away with assets acquired illegally. Moreover, it will dramatically reduce crime rate especially drug trafficking as a world-wide scourge.

However, the Justice Minister emphasized that signing an agreement was by itself not as important as its implementation and therefore expressed the hope that while Nigeria would try to abide by the terms of agreement, the US should also do same.

– Abubakar Nashim

Front view of Imperial College, London.



Alhaji Lukman (left) being received into the Fellowship of Imperial College by the Chairman of the Governing body, The Hon. Sir Henry Fisher.

Imperial College rewards Lukman

THE historic Royal Albert Hall, London is noted primarily in the United Kingdom as the venue for honouring men and women who have distinguished themselves in their chosen careers.

Accordingly, the Imperial College of Science and Technology Fellowship award ceremony for 1987 took place in the hall on October 22.

Five gentlemen, who internatio nally have contributed significantly in their different areas of profession and featured prominently in educational cultural, political and economic activities in the world were conferred the awards.

Among them was Nigeria's Petro-leum Resources Minister, Alhaji Rilwanu Lukman, who was the first African to receive such an award. Other recipients at the occasion were the 1967 nobel laureate for Chemistry, Professor George Porter; Emeritus Professor David Raphael; Professor Leonard Rotherham and Mr. William Brown

Unexpectedly, the prolonged chilly weather of London was warm that day with rays of sunlight permeating. The previous day, the temperature went very low to about eleven degrees centigrade.

The occasion was also the convocation ceremony of the college's over 1,700 graduates and postgraduates. The number of relations or friends who accompanied the graduands to Royal Hall was limited. Most of them came with either their mothers or fathers.

But people who came to cheer-up each of the fellowship award recipients were many. Journalists were strictly restricted to the hall, especially those carrying electronic gadgets.

At 1.30 p.m. London time, the Royal Hall which has four vertical sitting layers, had been filled to near-capacity. The graduands and their well-wishers had taken their seats, including those of the fellowship award recipients, all waiting for the 2.30 p.m. London time for the commencement of the ceremony and the arrival of the

award fellows.

At the interlude, the college choir, led by the institution's Head of Music-Department, Professor E. H. Brown, sang rehearsed song: "Hooray! The wine is here" from The Autumn of The Seasons, by Haydn.

At 2.30 p.m., the college procession for the ceremony emerged. It was in four groups. The first was made up of mainly students' representatives. The second consisted of the deputy registrar and senior lecturers; the third, the registrar, professors, secretary of the college, the newly elected fellows among others. The fourth and last group, included the college recror, the vice chancellor of the University of London and chairman of the governing body.

The ceremony started with a lengthy address by the College Rector, Professor E. A. Ash, which centred on privatisation of universities. After that, presentation of graduands followed. Each of them was presented to the chairman of the governing council. the Hon. Sir Henry Fisher.

On the fellowship recipients, the staff orator, Mr John Smith, who is also the college secretary, presented them to Sir Henry Fisher in addition to reading their citations which included their contributions to the development of the world. For example, Professor George Porter, the 1967 Nobel laureate for Chemistry, holder of 25 honorary doctorates, had long been ahead in the field of Photochemistry. He performed a fundamental work in chlorophyll to support photosynthesis and molecular biology.

The college secretary told the crowded audience that Nigeria's Alhaji Kilwanu Lukman, who wore a dark blue suit for the occasion, had established the personal authority he enjoyed at home in the volatile politics of petroleum resulting in his election as president of OPEC, one of the most influential jobs in the world.

"In 1970 he was appointed general manager of a cement company where his success led to his selection as the first chief executive of the Nigerian Mining Corporation, a parastatal responsible for all solid minerals other than coal."

Among his many achievements was the establishment of a brick industry to meet an insatiable demand for permanent buildings with a minimal call for imported materials.

Emeritus Professor David Raphael on his part, brought together previously unco-ordinated activities at the Imperial College in the teaching of Philosophy, politics, communications skills and modern languages. He was for ten years in Glasgow, "Edward Court professor of Political and Social Philosophy."

The fourth recipient, Professor Leonard Rotherham, carried out extensive research in atomic energy and has contributed enormously in establishing a link between the universities and industries. Finally, William Brown, an engineer who has been in active service for the past 35 years, bridged the

Cross section of the audience.

Fellowship award recipient leaving the Albert Hall, London.

The College Secretary, Mr. John Smith (left) reading Alhaji Lukman's citation.

Volta Dam in Ghana. He built the Auckland Harbour and designed the Strait of Gilbraltar.

Among the Nigerians present for the award ceremony were the former head of state, General Yakubu Gowon (rtd), the Minister of Science and Technology, Professor Emmanuel Emovon; Minister of Education, Professor Jubril Aminu; T. O. S. Benson; NNPC Managing Director; Mr. Godwin Aret Adams; and Mr. Micheal Ibru. Chief executives of oil companies in the country were equally present.

General Gowon later, in an interview, described Alhaji Lukman as one of the most successful ministers the country has ever produced.

"I have known him since his school days in Zaria and I know he deserved the honour that has been conferred on him. I feel very happy because it is not only an honour for the minister but Nigerians and indeed the black race at large".

Why must a Nigerian be the first African recipient of the award? Who makes the selection and how? What are the criteria? These questions were posed to the college publications and press secretary, Miss Lynda Davis to ponder upon.

Nominations for the award, she said, were made every year to a special committee made up of some members of the college's governing body, the highest decision-making body of the institution. However, how the selection is effected is never made public.

"All I know is that the award came to Nigeria among all countries in Africa because Alhaji Lukman was the person whose achievements satisfied the college's committee and finally the governing body at large."

Declared Miss Davis: "He has contributed immensely in restoring stability in the international oil market which both producers and consumers are benefiting from".

Later in an interview, Alhaji Lukman said that he was very delighted that the award was conferred on him. He said he thanked President, General Ibrahim Babangida, and all Nigerians for giving him the support.

With the ceremony come and gone, there are lessons from it. It showed that through hardwork, dedication, faithfulness, success for anybody is unlimited. The occasion also brought different tribes in Nigeria, other blacks and whites together

The man, Rilwanu Lukman

ALHAJI Rilwanu Lukman, Petroleum Resources Minister and current president of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), was born on February 1938, in Zaria, Kaduna State.

He had his elementary school career at Tudun Wada, Zaria, from 1944-46; Middle School in Zaria from 1948-49. He enrolled at the Government College (now Barewa College) in 1950, and in 1955, sat for his Cambridge School Certificate examination.

Between 1956 and 1958, he studied at the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, now Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, for his General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level.

Alhaji Rilwanu enrolled at the Royal School of Mines, Imperial College of Science and Technology, University of London, England, for a diploma in Mining (ARSM Mining) and a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering and Mining. He studied Economics on part-time basis, at the University of London.

He enlisted at the Institute of Prospecting and Mineral Deposits, University of Mining and Metallurgy, Leober, Austria, for a post-graduate certificate in mining and mineral exploration between 1967. and 1968.

The Minister who is married with three children, worked as assistant mining engineer in Statagruvor, Sweden, from 1962 to 1964. He was Inspector of Mines (later Senior Inspector) Mines Division, Federal Ministry of Mines and Power, Jos.

Furthermore, between 1964 and 1967, he was made acting Chief Inspector of Mines, responsible for Northern Inspectorate Region of the country. In addition, between 1970 and 1974, Alhaji Rilwanu was the General Manager, Cement Company of Northern Nigeria Limited, Sokoto.

In 1974, he was appointed General Manager and Chief Executive of the Nigerian Mining Corporation, Jos, a post he held until January, 1984.

In that month, that is January, 1984, he was appointed the Minister of Mines, Power and Steel, a post he occupied till January 1986 when he was redeployed to the Ministry of Petroleum Resources as its Minister and Chairman of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Board of Directors.

He was elected president of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) at the Island of Brioni, Yugoslavia in June 1986.

The eye-catching issue about his election was that it was at a period the international oil market reached its zenith of turbulence and volatility.

Between January and June 1986, prices of crude oil had nose-dived to below ten dollars a barrel from a peak of about 28 dollars recorded in the last quarter of 1985.

Undaunted by the instability of the oil market at that period, he swiftly stepped into action with a view to finding short and medium-term solutions to the vagaries in the oil market.

More importantly, his election came at a time OPEC ministers had held three meetings at different periods in Geneva, Switzerland without any realistic outcome.

At the Brioni meeting, Alhaji Rilwanu convinced the other 1' member-countries' delegates on the need to reach an agreement on production ceiling and national quotas.

Immediately after this recorded achievement, prices rose up steeply to about 16 dollars a barrel and had remained at about 18 dollars on the average at present.

It is not surprising, therefore, that he has been re-elected the organisation's president on three occasions. If he continues in office till December this year, he would remain the longest ever-served president in the 27 years of OPEC. By December, he would have clocked 18 months in office. The only oil minister that neared that was Indonesia's Dr. Subroto, who was in office for 15 months.

His leadership strategy in OPEC has as its centre-piece, "bilateral consultation." No accord had ever been reached without a room-to-room consultations with his colleagues, in what is now commonly referred to as "Lukman's Oil Diplomacy."

On the domestic front, his major area of concentration has been to complete projects initiated by his predecessors. For example, mechanical work has been completed on the fourth refinery, Port Harcourt. The new refinery is expected to be commissioned next year.

The plants which constitute the Ekpan Petrochemical Project have been completed and the test-run operations carried out The Kaduna spectrum of the first phase of the petrochemical project would be ready soon.

Both Warri and Kaduna refineries have been expanded by 25 and 10 per cents respectively. The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), through the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, is at moment, considering owning off-shore refineries.

More drilling operations have been effected. For example, drilling activities measured by the number of exploration, appraisal and development wells, increased from 61 in 1985 to 73 wells in 1986. Of these, oil was found in 11 exporations and 36 appraisa. development wells in 1986, while the rest were abandoned.

Plans for the construction of some gas-storage tanks to be located in Lagos, Calabar and Maiduguri, have been completed. The construction works would take-off next year (1988).

– Ndu Ughamadu,
Just back from UK.

Late President Charles De Gaulle of France. Began the relations with South Africa

France in constructive relations with Pretoria?

SINCE May 10, 1987, the Socialist President, Francois Mitterand has completed six years presiding over French politics. When he won the Elysee Palace from Giscard d'Estaing in May 1981, auguish gripped the South African authorities. But today, a South African diplomat assert: "He is a man with whom it is quite possible to deal. He is seeking constructive relations with Pretoria".

Sheer strategic, political and economic interests have regulated relations between France and South Africa. The South African regime indulges in the most heinous crime against humanity in the form of apartheid. It does not bother about the resolution passed by the UN urging it to give up the racist policy where the blacks have the right of self-determination. It illegally occupies the Namibian territory. Nevertheless, all these scars on the visage of South African regime have not induced any revulsion in France towards it. France has been conducting relations with South Africa with brazen apathy towards all appeals to refrain from supplying weapons to the apartheid regime, since the UN arms embargo of 1964.

France has become the largest supplier of arms to South Africa. Besides, France imports uranium from South Africa which is vital for her nuclear projects. In fact, the import of scarce raw materials from South Africa is a major factor in France's continuing relations with South Africa. Of course, the geostrategic position and potentiality of South Africa in the face of the growing so-called communist menace to the security of oil-routes of the Indian Ocean have been also the inputs of the French policy towards South Africa.

France had not much historical nexus with South Africa. But De Gaulle got opportunity to forge ties with South Africa in the wake of the UN sanctions of 1964, when the UK, which was in a way the sole and biggest arms supplier to South Africa yielded to the pressure of world public opinion to halt arms supplies to the apartheid regime.

As soon as the Labour Government of Harold Wilson decided to discontinue arms sales to Pretoria, De Gaulle jumped into the fray and French companies started negotiating substantial arms sales to South Africa in utter disregard for the UN embargo.

Avions Marcel Dassault, manufacturer of the Mirage, was more instrumental. The South African Minister of Defence, Mr. Fouche, visited Paris in June 1965 to clinch the deal for the French aircraft, Mirage III EZ Intruder fighter. France used this visit and deal for ensuring supply of uranium from South Africa. The two squadrons of Mirage III EZ Intruder fighters under the new deal were delivered during 1965-66. The South African Air Force also ordered a small number of Mirage RZ jets, special reconnaissance models fitted with cameras in the nose. By late 1966, the SAAF had also ordered for 16 Super Frelon helicopters, each powered by three turbine engines.

At the beginning, South Africa bought only military aircrafts from France. But gradually the French arms supplies, extended to the navy also. In April 1967, the South African Minister of Defence, then Mr. P.W. Botha, announced in Cape Town about the agreement with France by which South Africa would be able to place orders for a number of submarines of the Daphne-class.

Subsequently, Mr. Botha attended the ceremony of the launching in France on March 18, 1967 of the first of the Daphne class submarines being built in France at that time for the South African Navy. The other two Daphne class submarines were to be completed within the following 12 months.

The arms deals between France and South Africa continued unabated and not much hue and cry were made in the international forums about the flagrant violation of UN resolution by France till the end of 60s. In August 1969 a report on apartheid was submitted before the Political Committee of the Ministerial Conference of OAU, and in this report France, Japan, Britain and US were indicted for maintaining substantial commercial relations with South Africa. By 1970, Paris was selling to Pretoria military equipment and sophisticated military hardware worth 100 million naira every year. 36 Mirages and 16 Super Frelon helicopters had been delivered to South Africa by 1970.

France also earned the wrath of UN for her flagrant violation of the UN ban. The then chairman of the UN Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of South Africa, Mr. Abdul-Kahim Abby Farah (Somalia) stated that, of the big powers, only the Soviet Union was fully honouring the Security Council's arms embargo, while France honoured it "more in breach than in observance."

Certain changes seemed to appear in the French-South African relations particularly in the wake of the British government's declaration in July 1970 to resume the supply of arms to Pretoria. When President Kaunda of Zambia, who had gone on a mission to persuade western powers to stop arms supplies to South Africa, met the French President, Mr. Pompidou, on October 21, 1970, the latter allegedly assured him that France would not renew its contract for the sale of helicopters to South Africa, and would also revise its lists for

President Francois Mitterand of France. Play over South Afric

Pieter Botha, Prime Minister of South Africa. Not ready to give in

Harold Wilson, former British Prime Minister. No sense in apartheid

President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia. OAU chairman. Condemns apartheid

the sale of arms and armoured vehicles which could be used against guerrillas.

No doubt, it was a salutary gesture from a country which believed in riding roughshod over the wishes of the world community just in order to vindicate its undesirable whims. Of course, hopes rose very high due to such assurance from the French President but this plummetted very soon, as the subsequent disclosures showed that France had sold helicopters to South Africa for a number of years and most probably South Africa did not require more. Even the South African Minister, Mr. Botha, after hearing the results of the Kaunda-Pompidou talks in Paris, disclosed that his government did not need to buy either light arms or light armoured vehicles from France since "South Africa manufactures them on her own territory and does not need to import them."

However, the election of the right wing candidate, Mr. Giscard D'Estaing in 1974 made African leaders to speculate some innovations to be introduced by the Elysee Palace in the French policy towards South Africa. During the electoral campaign Giscard's speeches were studded with rhetorics. He had hinted that France would stop selling arms to countries where the rules of democracy were not respected.

But no sooner the new President shifted to the Elysee Palace than it was revealed that South African navy had ordered five submarines from French shipyards. In fact, the new French government of President Giscard appeared to wish only to enhance its economic and strategic ties with South Africa. It was gradually assuming the old role of Britain in sending its navy for manoeuvres with the South African navy.

At the Security Council in November 1974, the French delegation exercised its veto with the US and the UK to prevent South Africa's expulsion from the UN. And the announcement in December 1974 that the first batch of Mirage FI, fighter bombers, an improved version of the Mirage IIIs which the SAAF had been using for some years, to be assembled under licence in South Africa would be delivered early in 1975, came just a few days after the UN Special Political Committee had passed a resolution specifically asking Paris to terminate her military cooperation with Pretoria, France had voted against the resolution.

Ironically, despite the supply of fighter aircraft and submarines to Pretoria, France maintained better relations with Africa than any of the other Western powers.

In the initial year of Giscard's rule a trade mission headed by the Director of External Trade Relations at the French Ministry of Finance visited South Africa. Several important contracts were awarded to French firms by South African State Controlled bodies, and a consortium of French banks granted substantial credits to South African importers of French heavy machinery. France evinced interest in purchasing South African uranium, ore, particularly when she surmised uncertainties about its formerly safe supplies from Niger, Central African Republic and Gabon.

However, in 1975 President Giscard astounded many observers when he declared during a state visit to Zaire that "France would no longer sell arms to South Africa." But it was subsequently clarified that what the President intended was not a total arms embargo, but selective arms sales. The new ban was only a facade. It was taken as a political gesture of France to propitiate her African friends. Nevertheless, economic links between the two countries continued to expand. French exports to South Africa jumped by 44 per cent in value in 1975 while South African exports to France rose by 13 per cent. The South African Minister of Finance and of Information visited France. The former remarked, "I was most impressed by the French attitude towards us. They are eager to increase trade links and investment in our country. We, in turn, are making for more contract with them and much better relations between the two countries are coming fast." By 1975 France had become the fifth largest supplier of goods to South Africa, trade having risen by 300 per cent in the preceding five years. Figures for 1975 showed an imbalance in that South Africa exported ₦213m, but imported ₦324 m. from France.

The French-South African rapport was spectacularly cemented in May 1976 when the French consortium, Framotome was awarded the contract to build the Republic's first nuclear power station against tenders by US-Dutch and West German consortiums. The $500 million contract for the power station at Koeberg, 20 miles north of Cape Town on the Atlantic sea-board, came at a time of growing debate over South Africa's nuclear potential. In August 1976 the Framotome obtained the approval of the French government to sell South Africa two nuclear reactors to be used at the Koeberg nuclear power station. ₦850 m. export credit agreement was concluded by Escom with a French consortium led by Credit Lyonnais on "very favourable" terms. The deal caused a turmoil in African and Non-Aligned world. Rejecting the massive denouncement by its own opposition and especially by African countries the French authorities asserted that it was completely a commercial transaction and that the reactors were to be used only for peaceful purposes. However, the international criticism forced France to announce in November 1976 that she would stop further sales of nuclear reactors to South Africa.

More proof of military links between Paris and Pretoria was revealed in June 1976 when the French Ambassador in Lusaka conceded that France had sold two Corvettes to the South African Navy. South Africa had also clinched deals to buy four French built container ships worth ₦240 m., four airbuses for South African Airways worth ₦70 m. (financed by Franch export credits) and two Agosta 20 Torpedo combat submarines.

a game of cat and mouse

By Dr. Adewunmi Adeyemi, Lecturer at the Times School of Journalism

Mozambique:

Rebels cause more deaths

SOUTH Africa has in recent months proceeded with massive infiltrations of bandits/guerrillas into Southern Mozambique with the specific task of practising this extreme, horrific and inhuman form of terrorism – namely the indiscriminate slaughter of men, women and children.

The above statement from a report by the Mozambican Information Agency (AIM) on the latest attack by South African backed rebels in Southern Mozambique is a frequent occurrence and epitomises the dilemma of the young nation.

Since it shot its way to independence, Mozambique has not seen the much expected era of peace as she daily battles with racist South Africa's destabilisation threats and the distracting violence and devastation of counter-revolutionary Mozambique Resistance Movement (MNR).

Last Thursday, guerrillas of South African backed rebel National Resistance Movement (MNR), ambushed a convoy of buses and cars about 80 kilometres north of Maputo killing about 211 people. But according to the Mozambique Information Agency, this figure has risen to more than 278.

Mozambique's ruling Frelimo party charged that South Africa had directed the guerrillas to carry out the massacres adding that the tactics being used by the NMR guerrillas were "conceived and planned by the racist South African regime."

The Mozambique News Agency also reported that an estimated 300 terrorists participated in the ambush, firing from ditches at the convoy as it travelled on the country's main North – South road from Maputo to the provinces of Gaza and Inhambane. The agency said 80 vehicles were destroyed.

Because of the menace of South African backed MNR rebels, long distance trips by road in Mozambique are often made in army-escorted convoys in Mozambique to guard against guerrilla attack.

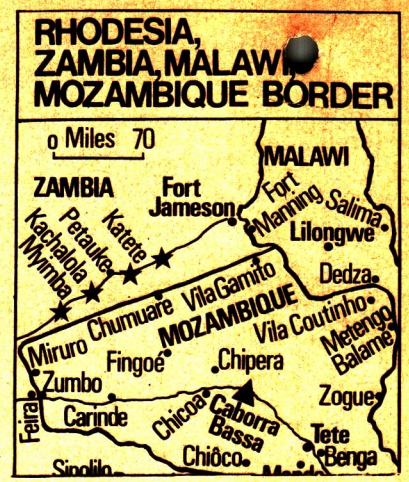
It will be recalled that to prevent racist South Africa's support of the rebels, Mozambique in 1984 signed the Nkomati non-aggression pact with Pretoria in 1984. But as characteristic of racist diplomacy, South Africa have largely ignored the agreement as it continues to support the rebels.

Meanwhile as characteristic of unpatriotic elements set to destroy their fatherland, the MNR Lisbon Office had denied responsibility for the latest ambush and for three previous massacres this year in which 569 people were reportedly killed. It claimed that the government had organised terrorist forces to stage massacres that were falsely blamed on the guerrillas.

South Africa and rebel destabilisation acts against the sovereign government of Mozambique is legion. It will be recalled that in October last year, South Africa's sabotage acts resulted in the death of Mozambique's revolutionary leader, Samora Machel whose Soviet-built tupolev aircraft was shot down over South African territory as he and other government officials were returning from a meeting of the frontline states in Lusaka, Zambia.

With the latest rebel attack on Mozambique in which South Africa has been implicated, the likelihood of a future South African invasion of Mozambique cannot be ruled out.

– Louis Okoroma



Ethiopia/Somalia:

Peace in sight?

WHEN the Somalia-Ethiopia skirmishes triggered in full scale in 1977, little did it occur to most observers and the two warring neighbours that the hostility was going to be a prolonged one.

While celebrating his 18th year in power recently, Somali president, Mohammed Siad Barre regretted that the conflict still persist. The 70-year-old president informed a military parade that Somalia and Ethiopia should spend their resources on developmental programmes rather than on weapons.

Such comment, analysts say was a welcome one that is in line with the one year old peace mission which has been going on between the two countries though not without stop gap aggression.

Relations between Ethiopia and Somalia have been strained since Somali independence in 1960 sequel to a dispute over the status of ethnic Somalis living in Ethiopia's Ogaden province which Somalia claim to be her territory.

Ethiopia, backed by Cuban troops and Soviet observers won the war but the dispute has dragged on. The two countries have since accused each other of harbouring and aiding rebels, cross border incursions and direct attacks. War aside, the two countries have other problems.

Somalia, for instance, has for long been in economic difficulties resulting from severe drought in some regions of the country which has led to famine.

Also Somalia has been battling with internal probelm of guerrillas.

Ethiopia on the other hand could not boast of relative peace. Her tragedy arises from the growing drought in the past few years, in the entire Sahel and Savannah belt of Africa and the distracting war both with Somalia and Eritrean guerrillas.

Observers are therefore calling for a long lasting peace committee to examine and identify the major areas of conflict with a view to ending the hostilities between the two countries. The peace moves so far made must be consolidated.

– Soji Ajayi

★ *President Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia*

★ *President Siad Barre of Somalia*

President Edwardo Dos Santos of Angola

Angola at cross roads

TUESDAY, November 11, 1987, marks the 12th anniversary of the independence of the South African State of Angola. It is irksome and disheartening that at 12, Angola which should have been bubbling with hope and energy in terms of political and socio-economic achievements, is still faced with a bleak future emanating from the debilitating effect of the civil war as old as the nation itself.

The circumstances leading to the present debacle stem from the manner she achieved her independence from her erstwhile colonial master (Portugal), 12 years ago. It will be recalled that Portugal granted independence to Angola without recognition of any of the Liberation Movements in the country represented by FNLA, UNITA and MPLA.

The brief stinct of General Spinola who took power from Salazer in 1974 hastened the decolonisation of Angola. Consequently, a peace conference held in Alvor Portugal in 1975, culminated in the setting up of a transitional government consisting of equal representatives from the Portuguese, UNITA, FNLA and MPLA. The transitional government was meant to terminate on November 11, 1976; the officially designated date for the independence of Angola.

This was not to be for the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) led by Holden Roberto and UNITA with imperialist backing broke up the Alvor accord and joined forces to exterminate the MPLA. These imperialist forces characteristically spearheaded by US, through the supervision of Colonel John Stockwell, CIA task force Commander in Angola, was on hand to provide massive military, financial and logistic support to the reactionary forces.

However, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) then under Augustine Neto, fired on by grassroot support was able to mobilise the Angolans who dealt a devastating blow on the puppets. With the defeat of these forces, Angola gained her independence under MPLA government.

It is against this backdrop that the present unflinching support of the Reagan Administration to the UNITA rebel forces of Jonas Savimbi should be seen. There is no doubt Reagan is acting according to the dictates of the legacy bequeathed by past US presidents. It is therefore nobody's consternation when Reagan treated Jonas Savimbi to a "Red Carpet" reception in the White House last year, in a visit that has resulted in more than $30 million military aid to help destabilise the Angolan government. This coupled with covert arms, Reagan shifts through Zaire and South Africa have not given the government a breathing space.

– Eddy Emeagi

Zimbabwe:

Moving in a new direction

ZIMBABWE'S move from the colonial legacy of Westminster system to a presidential type of government continued at a full swing with the introduction of a constitutional amendment bill in the country's parliament to create the post of an executive presidency, a move which is expected to strengthen the hold of the incumbent Prime Minister, Mr. Robert Mugabe, on the socialist state.

With the amendment, the post of the executive presidency is expected to be filled by Mr. Mugabe who will be chosen through parliament. Subsequent presidents will be elected by the Zimbabwean electorate every six years. The new president would have the power to chose his own vice-president and cabinet ministers from the members of the legislature.

According to the country's Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Mr. Eddison Zvobgo who introduced the amendment bill, if the new president refused to assent a bill which had been passed by the legislature, the assembly could over-ride his veto by a two-third majority. If this should happen, the constitutional amendment provides that the president would have to either assent the bail within 21 days or dissolve the parliament and call for fresh elections.

•Zimbabwean Prime Minister Robert Mugabe

The amendment also provides that Zimbabwe's parliament would have the power to pass a vote of no confidence on the president when he no longer enjoy the support of the legislature and this would necessitate a change of government through a new election.

Little of no significant opposition is expected to the bill in the parliament where Mr. Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) holds an absolute majority in the 100-seat house of assembly.

In spite of the assured easy passage of the bill, there have been pockets of opposition who strongly resist the amendment because it could possibly lead to dictatorship. However, government supporters have been quick to dispel this view saying that the amendment became necessary in order to strengthen and streamline the political development in the country.

– Abiodun Raufu

Weinberger throws in the towel

HE came into the United States' political limelight in 1980. And as a member of the 1981 original team that romped into the White-House alongside President Ronald Reagan, it took him less than two years to boldly prove his mettle as a first class presidential aide. Undoubtedly, as America's defence secretary for almost seven years, Caspar Weinberger succeeded in proving himself as the most committed ally of President Reagan in the arms-race contest with the Soviet Union. Thus his abrupt voluntary exit in early November from Reagan's cabinet for "personal reasons" which observers link to the rapidly deteriorating health of his wife, Jane, cannot fit into the archetype good riddance to bad rubbish.

For sure, Weinberger was not your pedestrian, mediocre, run-of-the mill defence secretary. Aside being a republican hawk who shares Reagan's dream of a strong and vibrant America's defence capability, his real genius lies in his immense capacity to strongly take up the battle for his beliefs; no matter the level of opposition, and fight doggedly to accomplish a desired goal. He was one of the most visible human landscape in global affairs of the 80s; a big influence on America's defence politics and a hardliner to the core – who left nobody in doubt of his earnest commitment to the resurgence of his country as the symbol of the universe's military superiority.

A veteran politician of no mean status, the tough-talking, 70-year old Weinberger had served under both presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. He was also the director of budget between 1968 and 1969 for his bosom friend, Reagan, when he was California State Governor. A bright-eyed indigene of California as Reagan himself, Weinberger who earned the sobriquet, "cap the knife", because of his tough-guy posture, struck a strong rhythm in America's mind with his rock-steady support for the controversial space-based defence project – the much-harped upon Strategic Defence Initiative – which he once proudly described as Reagan's "vision of a deterrence based not on the dangerous notion of Mutually Assured Destruction, but Mutually Assured Survival".

Indeed, speaking to students of Virginia Technical University in April of 1986, Weinberger had forcefully argued for the intensification of research into the SDI. He accused critics of the project of "unquenchable pessimism", and asserted that the multi-billion dollar enterprise has provided the most significant break-through in America's Defence Strategy that "have demonstrated power efficiencies that are needed for effective ballistic missile".

And very much against the ballyhoo and widespread cynicism of those who doubt the efficacy of the SDI to effectively block incoming missiles from landing on American soil in the event of a nuclear war with Russia, the former defence secretary affirmed that "I've seen the technical ingenuity and industriousness of the American people perform miracles before, and indeed we all have. And I can't believe the miracle age is over. I've no doubt that they will happen again and again, as long as we have the resolution and as long we have the really noble cause before us of trying to protect mankind from the terror of nuclear ballistic missiles, which at the moment is the only way we have of trying to keep the peace".

Casper Weinberger, former Defence Secretary of the US. Wife more dear to him than armament race

A dedicated American to his bones, Weinberger strongly believes, in spite of tough challenges from the Soviet Union, that the era of America's dominant defence prowess has not been eclipsed. Thus the affable ex-White House frontline official declared that "America's technological ingenuity and our creative defence is not really an accident. Just as victory in World War II was no accident. It is the result of a people who are dedicated to the protection of their freedom and are committed to peace, a people who are willing to pay the price in a very dangerous world".

Not unexpectedly and in attunement with the stereotype American aversion to the Soviet Union, Weinberger is of the opinion that Russia's defence system was "repugnant", and that the United States must "bear in mind that for the last 20 years, the Soviets have had a bewildering array of anti-ballistic missile activities for maintaining and upgrading the system they have ringing Moscow . . . The very vigorous research into lasers and other advanced technologies for strategic defence has gone hand-in-hand with an incredible build-up of offensive missiles".

Nevertheless, political analysts insist that more than any other Reagan secretary, Weinberger must be held responsible with the president for the disaster in Lebanon few years ago when a suicide bomb attack on their Marine troops headquarters by Islamic fundamentalist terrorists forced the shameful and hasty withdrawal of the United States forces from the war-thorn Arab nation.

However, by resigning his lucrative job to devote himself fully to the care of his wife suspected to be terminally ill, Weinberger has more than any other thing, proved himself to be also a worthy model husband-caring and loving. And that in spite of the sophisticated dubiosity and perfidy his exalted office demands, he remains human – with a good heart to cherish and truly loyal to a sick dear wife, the trappings of high office notwithstanding.

But the lame-duck Reagan administration will not miss Weinberger too much.

Frank Carlucci – new defence secretary, is another dedicated republican hawk – a cast in the mould of his predecessor.

– Abayomi Alao

New hopes on disarmament

CONCERNED citizens across the globe last week had cause to flash optimistic smiles as the Soviet leader, Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev and his US counterpart, President Ronald Reagan reached an agreement to hold disarmament talks in Washington from December 7, 1987. A joint Soviet-US statement issued in Moscow said that during the talks, both leaders would sign a treaty on the elimination of medium range and shorter range missiles.

The statement noted that the two leaders attached "exceptionally great significance" to the talks which would also cover a lot of bilateral issues that are of importance to the two countries. The statement further emphasized that the proposed summit "will in addition decide upon the agenda of the future contacts between Comrade Gorbachev and President Reagan and examine the question of preparing instructions for their delegations as regards future agreement on a 50 per cent cut in the strategic offensive armaments of both countries."

The new agreement on a superpower summit in Washington came as a surprise to many observers and analysts of superpower politics who felt that a US – Soviet summit would be difficult this year mainly as a result of the inconclusive talks between the US Secretary of State, George Shultz and the Soviet leader, Gorbachev, a fortnight ago in Moscow. The talks were meant to prepare the ground for the Reagan – Gorbachev summit which has now been agreed on.

The Moscow meeting was equally expected to reach a concrete agreement on the reduction of the superpowers' stockpile of deadly nuclear missiles. Most observers had expected the meeting to sail through effortlessly as the super-powers had in late September, 1987, agreed in principle to the abolition of their medium and intermediate range missiles.

During the September meeting which was held in Washington between Soviet Foreign Minister, Edward Shevardnadze and George Shultz, an agreement was reached on arms control treaty under which the United States' and Soviet Union's medium range missiles would be removed from Europe and eventually eliminated globally.

The hopes raised by the Washington meeting were thought to have been dampened by the deadlock in Gorbachev – Shultz talks in Moscow. The deadlock was provoked by Gorbachev's objection to the US Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) programme and the militarisation of the outer space. Gorbachev insists that any conclusive talks on disarmament must embrace the strategic and tactical weapons. He said that he would not go to Washington only to sign an agreement on intermediate range missiles.

President Reagan who refused to be stampeded by Gorbachev's standpoint, in a weekly radio address to his nation, said that his government "will not be pushed" into making any concessions just to secure a new summit with the Kremlin.

After the Moscow talks which lasted for two days, George Shultz left for Brussels to brief NATO allies on the outcome. In his press briefing before leaving Moscow, Shultz said that both sides had virtually agreed on the details of a treaty but that there were still "difficulties over verification".

The talks on how to put a halt to the maddening arms race have spanned many decades, as mankind totters on the brink of total elimination by nuclear threat. Such talks have produced various acronyms like SALT I, SALT II, and START. SALT I – Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty I was signed between the superpowers in 1972. And it was followed in 1977 by SALT 2. In 1982, Reagan added START – Strategic Arms Reduction Talks – to the ever widening vocabulary on disarmament.

The SALT I and II and START were all geared towards the non-proliferation and eventual elimination of the nuclear missiles and their war-heads. Presently, the US and USSR control 10,830 war heads with a fire power of 3,322 megatons, and 9,490 warheads with 5,794.2 megatons respectively.

Only last year at Reykjavik, Iceland, the Reagan – Gorbachev mini summit on disarmament struck an optimistic note on humanity for a nuclear free world. The Reykjavik summit reached a tentative agreement on the withdrawal of missiles placed outside Europe and the limiting of each country to the deployment of 100 nuclear warheads for defence purposes. The missiles to be withdrawn include the Soviet SS 20 missiles and the US Pershing 2 ground missiles aimed at one another and their allies.

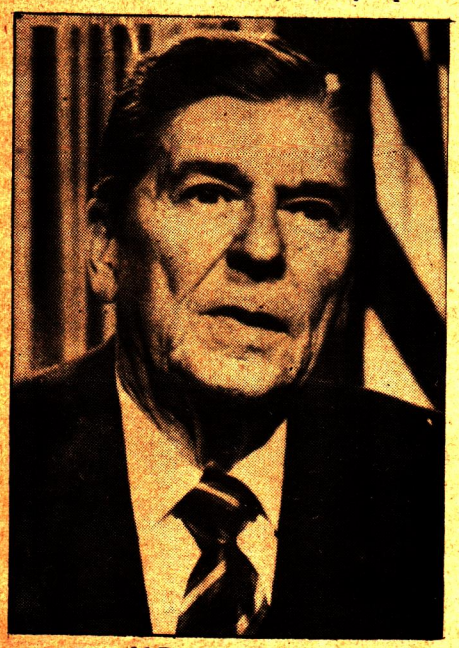
The agreement could not be complied with because of Washington's stubborn insistence on the SDI programme – a programme that violates the Outer Space Treaty, 1967, which prohibits the placing in orbit of nuclear weapons as well as all military activity on the moon and planets.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the Soviet Union, today, is more committed to disarmament and world peace than the United States. On August 6, 1986, Moscow imposed a one-year unilateral test moratorium on nuclear weapons and called on Washington to respond. Washington, apparently suspicious, was not forthcoming. Moreover, Gorbachev is considering another moratorium on medium range missiles before the end of this month – even though a summit on that has been scheduled for December.

Reagan's hypocritical attitude to disarmament was vividly demonstrated recently. As the Moscow talks were on, the United States was reported to have exploded a nuclear device at Nevada. And this brings the number of such explosions to 13 this year alone.

Sources at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, believe that there is no end in sight to the arms race for now, as the superpowers live in a world of mutual suspicion. However, they insist that continuous dialogue between the superpowers would ensure rationality in their actions and act as a restraint on the possible use of such deadly weapons. It is on this ground that they welcome the December summit.

–Emeka Nwosu



Ronald Reagan of the U.S.

Mikhail Gorbachev of USSR

FOLUSO OPADINA

Tamil problem:

The root cause

IT is well known that Sri-Lanka is an Asian country populated by about 14 million people. This population is made up of 72 per cent Sinhalese. 20.5 per cent Tamil (Sri-Lanka and Indian, 7 per cent Moors who are mostly muslims, 0.3 per cent Burghers, descendants of the Portuguese and the Dutch, married to locals). The articulate Tamil people since independence have been subjected to the most inhuman persecution and systematic annihilation by their more complacent and less educated majority Sinhalese.

The Tamil problems as are known today started in 1948 when the British handed power to the Sinhalese who became the new masters in a country whose main foreign exchange earner is tea. In that same year the hard working Indian Tamil were deprived of their citizenship after they had lived and enhanced the economy of the country for upwards of 150 years. As a result of this deprivation of citizenship the Tamils lost about 30 seats in the National Assembly of Sri-Lanka thus further reducing the political power base of the already subjugated minority Tamil.

One thing which is surprisingly common with all the British colonies after independence is that inherent instability, infighting and political struggle often led to genocide of one group against the other. Political rivalries which seemed to be a creation of the British on their former colonies have led to many extreme inhuman torture and despicable reactions from those who took power from the British masters. Thus the British colonialism is often replaced by the domination of African or the Asian majority group over the so-called minority group.

In the special case of the Tamil (Indian) people of Sri-Lanka, they are the minority in Sri-Lanka but in fact the majority, when one considers their number which is spread over to other countries of the Indian sub-continent. This realisation by the majority Sinhalese in Sri-Lanka may be responsible for the unfathomable persecution carried out by Sinhalese ruling class against their less fortunate Tamil compatriots. It is a pity that human beings do not learn from the past. The cases of other countries where minorities are deliberately deprived of justice ought to serve a lesson to the Sinhalese of Sri-Lanka so that they don't have on their hands potential separative movements, and dissidents within their country.

Right now the Tamil people of Sri-Lanka are undergoing a terrific and horrific experience which could be likened to the gargantuan large scale massacres of the Jews during the second World War, or the Jordanian Palestinian purge in the early 70s which depleted the Palestinian number. In spite of the fact that the Tamil are forced to speak Sinhalese language, they are also deprived sound and thorough education through the so-called education standardisation policy and also suppressed from getting the cushioned jobs in the civil service, which they had hitherto manned creditably during the colonial days.

The question now on the lips of unbiased and decent peoples the world over is who will liberate the Tamil? For how long will the world look on and allow the Sinhalese and now their Indian brothers perpetrate most heinous genocide on a people simply because of fear of a superiority of intellect and aggressiveness in hard work? It is a fact that the Tamil were industrious, educated and assiduous. They hitherto formed the core of Sri-Lanka's economic base and provided employment for thousands of Sri-Lanka peoples devoid of tribal discrimination and petty religious considerations.

As at now, Tamil 'Nationals' of Sri-Lanka are being mowed down by the Indian Army and the Sinhalese Police, in spite of the fact that 'law and order' was one of the President Jayewardene's main slogans when he came to power in 1977. However, as at now, there is neither law nor order in the country. The President has himself personally seen to that, under the very repressive and obnoxious public Security Act, the Army and the Police are empowered to cremate or bury dead bodies of Tamils without caring for an inquest or post mortem!

Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Tamil people can be detained for up to 18 months without trial or explanation whatsoever. As Amnesty International's report of some years ago said: "Torture has become a normal part of police procedure." However, it is pertinent to note that the systematic re-colonisation of the Tamils have been the government policy which is dominated by their master group, the Sinhalese. The large influx of Sinhalese to traditionally Tamil areas was one of such methods which they said was not in their own best interest.

At best the Tamils wanted individual migration. Large scale government-sponsored migration of Sinhalese is a deliberate policy to change the ethnic composition of the area which invariably has been responsible for the on-going communal violence and racial disharmony which has thrown Sri-Lanka wide open for the world to see.

Since signing the accord for peace between Sri-Lanka and India, thousands of innocent Tamils have been brutally killed, and tortured. Also many innocent Sinhalese have been killed by the Tigers. The world is looking and Britain which has a 'maternal' responsibility to save these people look on and in fact become more close to the Sri-Lanka authorities simply because Sri-Lanka tea is being controlled by British companies – (a British policy which has affected many British former colonies very badly). It is certain that the Tamils themselves hitherto looked up to Britain to come to their aid and save them from a group which has opened up a terror regime on them. Today the story is different.

It has become fashionable for the third world countries to suppress their minority groups. A system that may spell the doom of many nations.

If the Sinhalese people, as a group, wishes to avoid a potential Cyprus or Palestine, the Sinhalese must be prepared to stretch their hands of fellowship to their fellow men who happen to fall a minority by the sheer will of nature.

Bolshevik revolution:

Its impact on Africa

SATURDAY, November 7, 1987 marked the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Paradoxically, the revolutionary renovation of the lives of the peoples of that far-away former Tsarist Empire of Russia, has today affected the African continent to a very great extent.

Observers and scholars of International Politics realise that this principal event of the 20th century, which occurred during the First World War, has radically influenced the Third World in that the once powerful colonial empires have sunk into oblivion and new, emergent states, many of which are opting for socialism, have appeared in their places

Consequently, socialism is gaining more and more popularity in Africa as the masses of people have realised that it is impossible to solve socio-economic problems if they aspire to develop evenly by dropping anachronism and capitalism. For instance, in the Maghreb countries of North Africa, the Soviet Revolution inspired the Moroccans to armed anti colonial struggle and even precipitated the popular movement in Egypt culminating in the proclamation independence in 1922.

It was the 6th Congress of the Bolshevik (Communist) Party, which met in Petrograd (now Leningrad) in August 1917, that voted for and launched an armed uprising against the status quo of l'ancien regime of capitalism that ended in a victorious socialist revolution. The Soviets, under Lenin, carried out their revolution without outside interference and have since been transforming their society through the socialist methodology.

Africans have similar fate. Nobody and no country, not even the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, are obliged to lead the struggle for social and economic emancipation for African people s. The task is for us (Africans) to fight for ourselves.

The only external aid is that we should learn from other liberated societies how they overcame their backwardness and economic dependency. This is where the October 1917 socialist revolution becomes very relevant to the African situation.

Today, African countries not only want to eliminate the by-products of colonial dispensation, but are already resisting neo-colonialist offensive measures. In fact, African countries have been fighting for economic independence. This economic war is being waged against imperialist forces.

To solve it, revolutionary governments in Africa should nationalise the main spheres of our economy and concentrate all its commanding positions in the leaders of our states. Secondly, socio-economic development should be planned and executed on a national scale. Thirdly, indigenisation should be very well monitored and practicalised.

As far back as 1922 during the Genoa armaments conference, the Soviet Union advocated the need to halt the arms race and start disarmament for the sake of mankind knowing full well that developing countries are incapacitated in that direction.

After World War II in which the Soviet Union made major contribution to the victory over fascism, national liberation movements acquired a larger horizon in the African continent.

Therefore, almost all the newly independent African states within the last decade opted for socialism as an ideology based on Marxism-Leninism. It is still fresh in our memories that the history of the Declaration of the United Nations Organisation on the granting of independence to erstwhile colonial countries was passed in 1960 on the initiative of the Soviet Union. About a dozen African states (including Nigeria), gained independence in the year 1960 alone!

Having seen the Soviet socialist light lit in 1917, many African countries took a clue. Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, Libya, Benin, Bourkina Faso, Algeria, Congo, Somalia, Kenya, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana etcetera have embarked upon socialist orientations in their day-to-day development programmes. Thanks to the October Revolution.

As an annual festivity, the Red Square in Moscow which symbolises Soviet nationhood received innumerable dignitaries including Heads of State and Governments from all over the world on November 7.

They paid respect to the embalmed body of Lenin (1870-1924) which lies perpetually in the Maosoleum as someone merely sleeping. National flags flew and colourful parades were inspected. Soviet war planes zoomed over the Red Square to show Soviet military power and political declarations made to re-invoke and re-kindle the spirit of the 1917 Revolution.

In recent years, I have never missed the Soviet national day parade in Moscow but this time around, I stayed back and joined other struggling compatriots in Nigeria to mark the day by attending the reception under the aegis of the Soviet ambassador at his Victoria Island residence in Lagos.

In retrospect, Nigeria secured the services of the Soviet Union to quell her civil war (1967-70). The USSR is also known to have supplied arms and ammunition to other African countries that solicit her help in maintaining internal security or coping with external aggression.

And as a corollary, it will be platitude to disclose that the recently erected maosoleum of Papa Awo (1909-87), got its inspiration from Lenin's own in Moscow. Little wonder therefore, that as tourists now line all-day-long to see Lenin's mummified body, so also do they do for that of Chief Obafemi Awolowo at Ikenne.

To many, Awo was not only a patriot but an African statesman who should be defied in the Lenin way.

ADAMS ALIU

Queen Elizabeth II of Britain

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain

Tackling the Fijian debacle

THE Vancouver, Canada 1987 biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) "jamboree" had come and gone. For five good days, between October 13 and 17, 1987 46 leaders of the 49-nation member-states of the organisation deliberated on a number of world and regional issues. As expected, the summit was dominated by the vexed question of the imposition of sanctions against the racist and apartheid Pretoria regime; the debt problems of the underdeveloped world; ways to bring economic relief and succour to the frontline states – especially to Mozambique that was specially invited to the Conference – and the constitutional (or should we say internal) crisis in Fiji.

While Thatcher and her cohorts were vehemently opposed to the imposition of a mandatory and comprehensive economic sanction on South Africa, she and the Queen were quick in their show of hypocrisy and double-standard over matters that concerned non-whites. There were sanctimonious howls of condemnation of Col Stiveni Rabuka's attempts in Fiji to reserve power exclusively for his native Melanesians. This show of shame came to an end when the Queen announced her "sad" acceptance of Governor-General Sir Rata Ganilau's resignation as the Fijian figure-head leader. That in effect, meant the expulsion of the tiny Island of Fiji from the Commonwealth of Nations.

The questions that readily come to mind are many. Was that decision constitutional? Has all the modalities for effecting the change to a republican status by Fiji been fully addressed by the Commonwealth? Was that decision in line with precedent? And finally was it just another means of blackmailing smaller nations – in this instance Fiji – to become apron-strings of the big powers and to pursue policies that are not in their own national interests?

It is repeating the obvious by saying that the constitutional crisis in Fiji started when Col. Rabuka deposed the incumbent Prime-Minister, Timoci Bavadra, who was the leader of the ethnic Indian-dominated coalition.

It should also be noted that the Indians, who make up about 50 per cent of the Fijian population, had monopolised all the socio-economic and political sectors in Fiji. They control virtually all the top posts in the military, civil service, judiciary, administration, commerce etc. In one word, they became masters in this new land while the ethnic and indigenous Fijians were made second class citizens in their own native land. Although they make up about 48 per cent of the population, they have had no practical say in the affairs of their nation. Hence Col. Rabuka – an indigenous Fijian – wanted a constitution that would guarantee the political and economic dominance by the native Fijians.

Sir Ratu, the Governor-General who had been representing the Queen since Fiji became an independent dominion within the Commonwealth with the Queen as the ceremonial Head of State on October 10, 1970, refused to accept or even recognise the change effected by Col. Rabuka and all the efforts being made by the latter to make sure that the indigenous Fijians were masters in their own country, i.e. a right to self-determination recognised by the United Nations.

However, after all attempts at resolving the constitutional crisis had failed, due partly to the intransigence of the Indians who did not want to accept the new status-quo and due partly to London's hostility, Col. Rabuka on October 7, 1987, declared Fiji a Republic. India, Australia and New Zealand were the first to call for the head of Rabuka. The Indian position is clear. Their kith and kin in Fiji have gained the commanding heights of the Fijian economy, and they remit home a sizeable amount of money in foreign exchange.

Australia and New Zealand were also apprehensive because, they feared that the ferment of ethnic nationalism in the South Pacific, blowing from Fiji, could spread to their territories, where the indigenous Aborigines and Maoris have been turned into second class citizens, restricted to "concentration camps", and mercilessly exploited by the white settlers.

However, the announcement by the Canadian Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, who was the host of the Vancouver summit, of the expulsion of Fiji from the Commonwealth was hasty, unconstitutional and irregular It failed to take into cognisance a similar precedent made by India in 1947.

It should be remembered that India, Ceylon, Pakistan and Burma started agitating for their independence which was only granted by the British in 1947.

The Fijians should be allowed to work out their new constitution, get it approved or rejected in a general referendum – which Rabuka had promised – and permitted to make up their minds about the satus by which they wish to be known and addressed socialist, democratic, monarchical, republican – etc. After all, what's in a name ?

— Dr. Adenrele Alade

Arap Moi! ahoy!

By Henry Atenaga

RECENTLY President Babangida hopped on his executive plane to President Arap Moi's Kenya flying aloft the flag of our Foreign Exchange Market (FEM). But now, it looks like the ball joggler is headed for the offside. Our FEM, from all looks, is now headed for the crucial 'Bermuda Triangle' that spelt the waterloo to white-tail-waving Arap Moi's currency auctioning a while back.

President Babangida had apparently thought we had crossed the triangle. Well, we hadn't. Instead, because the resource base of Kenya and Nigeria differed, ours was delayed while Arap Moi was woken up too early by the hopelessness of his country's foreign exchange position. Once woken up, he rolled back the carpet so fast, that he skated on a very politically slippery ground for a while.

That, of course, gave the gaping hole through which President Babangida recently squeezed in with the FEM flag flying in his hands and with an eye on other African countries saddled with debts.

Hitherto, FEM had buttered the average farmer's bread enough for local food stuff prices to stay relatively low despite the jump in the price of imported components and most manufactured products. In the end, the backlash from FEM for the populace was partially neutralised by government ability to hold down the price of common commodities and services, the so-called "essencoes'.

With both sticks and carrot, transporters were stopped from increasing fares even in the face of higher price of imported spares and higher replacement values for vehicles. More naira was flushed down the subsidy toilet to hold down rates charged by most public corporations even if, for a time, it meant,sick babies like the Nigerian Airways and Nigerian Railway Corporation got more terminal burdened with unserviced planes and inadequate coaches. Each servicing or purchase entailed foreign exchange outflow, remember?

Above all, petrol prices allowed to shed some subsidy pre-SFEM, were again allowed to stay stable even as SFEM came. in with increased overheads and higher naira prices for inputs. Result? A Nigerian populace, especially the middle class, further marginalised but not as much as the Kenyans were. A point which perhaps must have made a minority man like Arap Moi wish he had attempted his experiment as a Nigerian leader, no matter the degree of his own ignorance of what the new measures really meant.

But he needn't have bothered if such a thought crossed his mind. The boomerang, from current indications, is now on its way home in Nigeria. And at full speed too.

Petrol prices are to go up. Air fares have already doubled. Some rail fares may soon follow. And taking a cue, the transporters have since given notice of new transport fares. Higher telephone bills per minute are to follow. And of course, NEPA charges.

These services have one thing in common. They are services with multiplier reaches across the economy. Although the middle class and the urban lower class stand to be most adversely affected by the rates spiral-warming up for a zenith next year, the rural farmer will also pay more to transport his yam tubers to the market just as the upper class people have been spending less on leisure because of higher cost of necessities.

The phenomenon is called cost push inflation and it is neither a respecter of persons nor of efficiency. For example, the impact of FEM – induced higher prices for raw materials on a UAC and an Ibru Organisation may differ relative to efficiency levels, but you can bank on one thing for both: Higher operational costs. And when you add that to lower demand (thanks of course, to the liquidity squeeze) you end up with higher unit costs and no less.

Which means that by about June next year, not even Chief Falae and his well-heeled group of optimists will be able to down-play inflationary pressures by pointing to indices dominated by food and accommodation prices. By then, FEM will face its greatest test as we find ourselves on the political boat Arap Moi had to abandon to stay afloat.

But not quite exactly, I concede. One, because Nigeria today is not talking and attempting to practise democracy; the gun is running the show. And two, unlike Arap Moi, Ibrahim Babangida has since proven himself a master of the Nigerian political game.

FEM will stay so long as the General says so and the boys smile along with him. Others like us will only shout and scream or sulk in private.

And why not? Only the socialists amongst us can afford to walk about mindful of the likely people's power at the ready to unleash blood and fire on the nation over economic issues. No thanks to the Gumis and Okogies of our world. What has been known for quite sometime has become national knowledge: The Nigerian will spill blood and even break up this nation over religious and political issues as against economic ones.

Unfortunately, and here's the ever echoing laughter from history, the economic issues are always the foundations from which others take root. Remember religion as the opium of the poor?

So, I will advise the President to make another trip to Kenya. This time, he should leave the FEM flag behind and try to find out how come the inflation cross was too much for the Kenyans to bear Because even though, premature ditching of FEM under pressure could be a long term mistake, the government should not depend on muscle while handling the FEM monster called hyperinflation now dead set for home.

Gold out:

Foreign beer likely in

SONA Breweries Limited, brewers of the Gold beer has launched, a smaller sized package brand of Gold-beer into the export market.

Mr. Jean Claude Hamez, Managing Director of Sona Breweries Limited disclosed to the parley that the company was filliped into exportation of Gold beer, by the need to garner foreign exchange to, "Finance Sona's diversification programmes already embarked upon."

Hamez disclosed that market research which spanned Cameroun, Ivory Coast and Conakry Guinea, shows a potential good reception for Gold beer-export brand, billed for exportation before December, 1987.

The Managing Director, in this exclusive chat with the parley disclosed that the brewers are invited, last month, by the Federal Ministry of Finance for discussions on the issue of imported beer. The idea of lifting the ban on imported beer, was however unanimously opposed by the Nigerian brewers.

Hamez contended, and logically too, that, "Whereas we are not affraid of competition, but we want a fair competition" asking: "How do you propose a ban on the importation of malt (cereal for traditional beer brewing) which our potential foreign competitors also use, and lift the ban on imported beer? Does that allow for a fair competition in the domestic market?

In this vein, Hamez argued that if the January 1988 speculation for government ban on importation of malt holds, it could be unrealistic to lift the ban on importation of beer. Although the Finance Minister, Dr. Chu Okongwu could not be brought into the parley to answer some questions before goging to the press, yet sources close to the Finance Ministry unveil that, "the Government intends to lift the ban on imported beer, and raise import duties.

In the face of the trying economic period, indigenous companies are currently enmeshed, Sona Breweries, like others, as part of sales promotion strategy dolled out ₦10,0 (ten thousand naira) as first price to Mr. Daniel Young of I, Iyalodi Street, Ajegunle, Apapa.

Dr. Chu Okongwu, Minister of Finance.

Mr. Young, a patroniser of Gold beer, won the first price of gold jackpot, 2nd draw with ticket No. 01025 at an impressive ceremony on October 30, 1987, at Cinema Hall, in National Theatre, Iganmu.

Mr. S. A. Akinbola, National Sales Manager of Sona Breweries, told the parley that "The gold Jackpot was part of the company's promotional strategies to sensitise the consumers to Gold beer patronage.

Akinbola said that sales promotion is particularly relevant in recessed economic times especially now, that, "We at Sona have braced ourselves up in order to battle squarely the problems of the present and conquer the challenge of the future.

The Sales Manager disclosed that, Ever before the government reversed its earlier decision to effect the ban on importation of barley, from 1990 to January, 1988, Sona Breweries Management have started to make bold moves to ensure that the company blazes the trail and is not caught napping.

"Our efforts paid off and the result is the successful brewing of a 100% maize beer.

The Peak:

A unique beginning

IN this era of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), sapping the poor pocket situation of the ultimate consumer, a unique thing is happening to the entertainment industry.

At the Adeniran Ogunsanya drive in Surulere, the Peak Nite Club and Restaurant, has come on board. Capt. Sam. Agoni (retired) a regular Peak patroniser told the parley that, "The peak is intended to cushion the hard economic realities of Nigerians after the day's job as it is the greatest thing that has happened to the Nigerian entertainment industry.

"The Peak", which Agoni says "is computerised", was opened recently amidst pomp and pageantry.

The parley congratulates, the proprietor, Chief Mike Inegbese on his avowed desire to lighten the hard economic realities of our times through subsidisation of services at the the Peak.

Company goes triangular

AN indigenous company, African Trust Holdings Limited has adopted the triangular trade strategy with a view to bridging over, the ravages of government tight fiscal and monetary policies.

"Triangular trade, an improvement on Trade-by-Barter", Mr. George Holmes, Company's Marketing Manager explained, "is being adopted by African Trust Fund Limited through the sales of our Cocoa Beans to some companies in West Germany in exchange for such fast moving commodities as fire fighting equipment which we sell here in Nigeria to such sectors as the petroleum and others.

Throwing more light on triangular trade his company pursues, Mr. Holmes hypothesises. "For instance, if we want to buy $40,000sworth of stock fish say from Norway; and due to the scarcity of foreign exchange, we have grade A Cocoa Beans to exchange for stockfish. It could happen that the company in Norway does not have any use for cocoa beans. Then the trade manoeuvres could now be triangular, once a third party company (who needs cocoa beans) comes into the picture", adding: "We are then able to bring in our needs through this kind of triangular trade.

– ALIYU MOMOH

Trade fair opens with fanfare

THE present economic recession notwithstanding, the seventh edition of Lagos International Trade Far was declared open last week-end with much pomp and pageantry. The over one week fiesta featuring exhibitions of various goods and services promises to be an event capable of attracting over 2 million visitors. There are over 300 participants, among which are 13 foreign countries and their subsidiary companies.

The fair returned to its traditional venue, along Lagos Badagry Expressway, after an extensive renovation was carried out on the complex by the Federal Government to meet international standard required of fairs of such magnitude after a few years of neglect. Although the repair cost in monetary terms could not be ascertained, the repair work could be seen to be adequate to cater for this fair's needs.

New communication facilities have been provided by NITEL; the bore holes providing potable water have been reactivated, constant power supply is assured, and adequate arrangement made for transporting visitors to and fro. And in the words of Mr. Kola Daisi, chairman, Trade Fair Committee of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce, this fair promises to be an exciting one when compared with past fairs in the provision of essential facilities and services.

The fair promises to show to the world what Nigerians have been able to achieve under the strangulating effects of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The key area where most visitors have been thronging is the export pavillion, showing an abundance of export items in the wake of the new slogan, "Export for Survival." Two main halls are being used for the various exhibitions; these are halls 1 and 4. In addition are some satellite halls and adjoining open spaces and lawns. Hall 4 is essentially for government-owned parastatals and the various state governments, while Hall 1 is essentially for private exhibitors. Other private exhibitors and some foreign countries constructed their pavillion on the adjoining open spaces and lawns.

A development which arose from staging of the fair is the boom in business being recorded by local food vendors, fast food joints and mobile canteens. Some of them have taken advantage of the large number of visitors expected at the fair to set up this booming business.

– FEMI OLATUNDE

•A scene at the trade fair

Group organises export talkshop

WITH all attention being diverted to the on-going 7th Lagos Trade Fair, the Banking Group of the Association of Nigerian Exporters (ANE) is organising a 3-day Export Conference from today, November 9 to November 11, 1987 to coincide with the fair as a mark of honour to the fair's organisers.

The Banking Group, made up of about 35 merchants, commecial and co-operative banks in the country, is organising the conference to take stock of non-oil export activities, government non-oil export policy measures, their impact and implementation so far and to project 1988 non-oil export strategies. In addition, the conference will provide the participants the opportunity to identify common interests which will motivate them to form more interest groups within ANE.

Said Mr. Chris Udoh, chairman of the Banking Group: "By organising this conference, the Banking Group has taken cognisance of the fact that the development of export culture and education in Nigeria is the joint responsibility of government, individuals, companies and organised private sector. It has also recognised the need to provide a solid framework for an efficient non-oil export system as a strategy of restoring Nigeria's trading image abroad and setting the pace for its members' trade finance business.

A total of six exhaustive papers on non-oil export will be presented by experts. In addition, there are discussant groups, which make for comprehensive analysis of all issues involved in non-oil exports.

At the end of the conference, the conclusions and recommendations are expected to be compiled for presentation to the appropriate authorities.

The dark side of export markets

By Olaniyi Openuga

SINCE the promulgation of Export (Incentives and Miscellaneous Provisions) Decree of 1986, the export business scene has attracted in an unprecedented fashion, a large populace of nationals as well as foreigners.

Although, it has been given varied interpretations by business 'adventurers', the export drive remains the nation's survival strategy. But what has become obtrusive is worrisome. Our people are now ready to export just anything to earn foreign exchange. The situation now is re-echoing the drumbeats of the era of emergency contractors of the Second Republic.

What is more unsavory? Cases abound where a confirmed market is got by some potential exporters for products whose knowledge they lack. There was a recent case of rejection of a ship-load of cocoa beans because importers realised that they were of poor quality. The exporters have no knowledge about grading and were ignorant of the need to keep to specific level of quality to match export market requirements.

There are also cases where prices are altered after agreement has been reached, quotations made without thorough understanding of the prevailing overseas market prices and special packaging requirements ignored. These and many other indicators of export marketing myopia and impotence of export business management skills have persistently made what could have resulted in profits, an agonizing business failure.

Yet, an appreciable number of economists, bureaucrats and business management gurus have mistakenly pointed at the ECOWAS sub-region as an embodiment of fertile markets for Nigeria's exports.

I wonder if they have put into consideration the basic issues of the competitiveness of Nigeria's exports and the capacity of these markets to absorb them before jumping into conclusions.

From my own empirical study, Nigerian exporters are yet to penetrate ECOWAS market not only because most of our exports (agricultural commodities) are also available in ECOWAS countries but also, due to high tariff and stiff competition especially from South-East and Asian exporters.

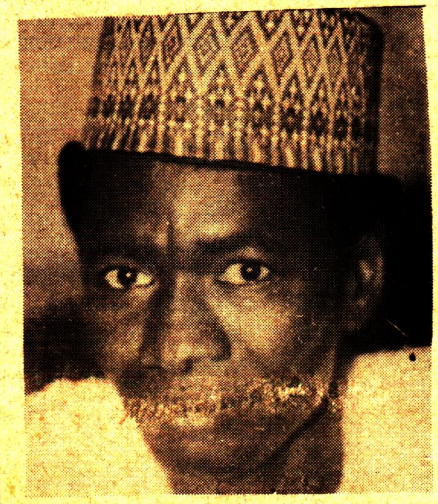
Although, there were some improvernments in oil sales which led to total earnings during the first quarter of 1986 outstripping the budgeted figure of ₦2,395.5 million by ₦84.4 million, the earnings from non-oil exports fell below budgeted figure by ₦195.4 million.

With the worsening world recession which started to loom in the early 1980s, protectionism has waxed either overtly or covertly all over the globe.

There are tariff as well as non-tariff measures taken to restrict exports with the aim of protecting infant industries or shaping balance of payments position or both. Every country maintains a set of trade regulations and it behoves the potential exporter to have adequate knowledge of these before taking a trial trip.

Arguably, it can be dicey to approach two different foreign markets the same way because different nations are heterogeneously populated.

In the case of loose confederation of regions such as the US, each state has its own ways of doing business, its own set of consumer behavioural patterns and other environmental differences. World markets present a curious set of inconsistencies and kaleidoscopic features.



Alhaji Sulaiman Mamman, Minister of Trade

Therefore, the problems of the Nigerian export businessman derive from the strangeness of the environment within which he must implement his marketing programmes and his success depends partly on his ability to assess and adjust properly to the workings of the uncontrollable variables.

By uncontrollable variables, I mean the different cultural, political, economic, technological and legal settings. The nature of these are revealed through adequate situation analysis. This is following a proper definition of business, its mission or purpose.

Since success in the world market will depend more on the marketing skills than on production or financial resources, the export businessman should possess the best qualities of a sociologist, psychologist, diplomat, economist, and an astute administrator with some knowledge of law in addition to export marketing know-how.

Well, I quite appreciate the efforts of some trade associations, notably, the Cocoa Association of Nigeria (CAN) which has begun to take steps to resolve the issue of poor quality exports to enable Nigerian cocoa regain the premium price it used to enjoy in the world market. I expect the Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) to do something tangible with a view to ensuring the maintenance of desired product quality and packaging standards.

My advice is that neophytes in the field should be willing to benefit from available educators and advisers who are willing to share their knowledge and experiences with them rather than groping in the dark. At least, if not for any other thing else, facts are required to beam light on the dark side.

BEHIND the all-embracing fashion designing company – BIBI DESIGNS is a young, brilliant, articulate and confident graduate of economics, Bibiana Nze, the sole proprietress and Managing Director.

When she returned to Nigeria in 1984 after her studies in Britain, Bibi, unlike most Nigerian graduates, was least concerned about government job. She was rather more concerned about what she would make out of her talent. So, after her one-year National Youth Service with the NNPC, she decided to go into self-employment.

As a youth corps member with the NNPC, Bibi had already been spotted out by her colleagues as a fine designer and received several orders for different designs. Today, with her fantastic embroidery works, she and her 10-member staff can turn any native fabric and plain cotton into beautiful wears.

Bibiana Nze

An alumnus of Methodist Girls High School, Yaba, Bibi sees the designing industry in Nigeria as very fast growing and thinks that the increasing number of fashion designers in the country is a good development. As far as she is concerned, "the more designers we have in the industry, the higher the competition. She is optimistic, that given the right encouragement, the designing industry will grow to a comparable level with others in the world.

If any designer has confidence in herself, she should go on and create. That is Bibi's advice to the young Nigerian designers. She would want the older generation of designers, which includes her mother, to give the young ones the chance to try their own talents.

With her most creative, imaginative and unique art works in the area of embroidery and designing, and with her fashion house now opened, Bibi is set to satisfy both men and women in the fashion world. Fashion wears, sports wears, beautifully designed evening wears, beaded, native and casual office wears, are all available at moderate prices.

Some of her designs, she said, have already found their ways to Europe and America.

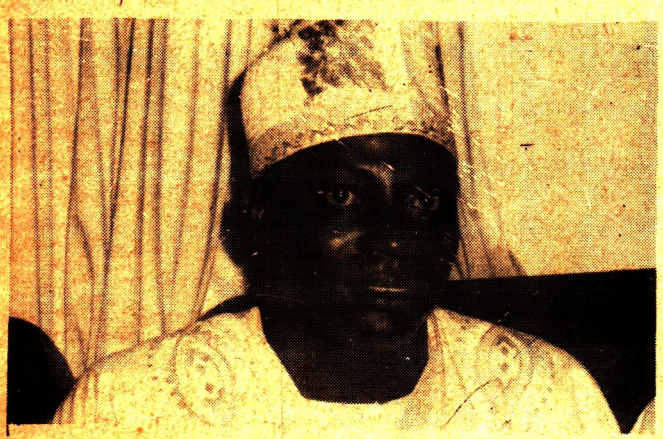
TALK about an enterprising young man who has two wives, operates over six companies, and lives modestly in style and you are talking about Alhaji Dan Musa Sadiku. Always clad in flying indigenous attires, with an ebullient smile to match, his affable personality, Alhaji Sadiku is no overnight sensation.

How did he strike it big then? He said: "I made it – if you call this making it – through sheer dint of hard work. I started in 1983 when I resigned my full time employment with Shell Nigeria Limited (now National Oil Company) and set up two companies; Tasado Group of Companies and Tay Construction and Building Services Limited ...."

Alhaji Ibrahim Dan-Musa Sadiku, born into a humble muslim family at Igbaja in Ifelodun local government area of Kwara State, says he never had any support from any brother, sister or uncle; "I am self-made if you like."

Apart from the bitter reminiscence of the death of his brothers and sisters (11 of them) who died the same day in a ghastly motor accident, Alhaji Sadiku is an overly happy man. Any lei sure? "Oh, I'm a sports enthusiast. In my early days, I was very much involved in football. I still find time for reading, playing tennis and watching good videos. . . ."

Does he nurse any political ambition? Says he. "Of course come 1992, I would want to serve this country. But not at the top level, would want to rise from bottom to the top."



*Dan Musa

Mrs. Olufunlayo Adewale

OLUFUNLAYO Abeke Adewale has devoted all her life to taking care of patients in and outside the hospital premises. Even when she retired as the Chief Nursing Officer of the Federation in 1982, she still teamed up with her husband in running the affairs of Onitiri Clinic, a privately owned hospital set up by her husband.

With a charming disposition capable of aiding the quick recovery of any patient, Mrs. Adewale studied nursing in the United Kingdom where she bagged her SRM in 1951. From then onwards, she has made the rounds of various wards before she became a matron at the National Orthopaedic Hospital, Igbobi Lagos. The many years were not spent attending to patients alone. They were interspersed with a series of other post-graduate courses as well as an active participation in associations aimed at improving the nursing profession and welfare of women. In actual fact, she was the first president of West African College of Nursing in 1981, while presently she is the chairman of Committee on Women and Development for Lagos State.

Recently, due to her active interest in improving the welfare of patients, she, along with some other notable figures like Chief Mobolaji Bank-Anthony formed a league of friends of the National Orthopaedic Hospital. And with her attribute of setting the pace, she was made the first president of the league.

A mother of four, Mrs. Adewale likes cooking and taking care of people.

– MAURICE OGAR with FEMI OLATUNDE

Still travelling with the blues

IN Nigeria 'blues' is generally defined as soft sensuous music. Sometimes too it is seen as jazz. All are wrong definitions. Yet, the blues, an abbreviation of 'blue devils' has been around since the sixteenth century.

Essentially, it was born in loneliness, A wholly black creation, right from inception it has been as Tony Palmer defines it: a music of accommodation, of coping with the realities of living in a socially and economically segregated society. It is not indeed music for holding hands and dancing in the dark but for expressing the desolate sense of having no right to be where one is. It highlights, "the battering the human spirit takes when it strains to ascend toward its true purpose."

Memphis Slim the big man of the blues in 1961 said of the genre: "The blues is a soulful music. You just sing about moving human experience. You lose your job, you're out of money. That's when you sing the blues."

In yet another interview with Alan Lomax in 1946 he was quoted as saying, "when I have troubles, blues is the only thing that helps me. I mean that's the only way to ease my situation. If I have lots of troubles, for instance, a rent situation and so forth and so on like that, the blues is the only thing that gives me consolation."

What this means is that the blues is a basic emotional response to an oppressive environment, a song of the alienated.

At 72 (he was born on September 3, 1915) Peter Chatman known to all of us as Memphis slim has as they say seen it all.

It will be interesting watching him again, knowing that his soul blues is still as authentic and relevant as ever.

Standing at an impressive six feet four inches, Memphis Slim's personality said Charles Fox is as amiable as it is striking.

He learnt tye ropes working in the barrel houses and honky-tank which flourished in Memphis during the 1920s and 1930s.

Giants of the blues like Theodore Cox who could play all types of piano blues, swing, Speckled Red and Roosevelt Sykes.

Peter Chatman (Memphis Slim)

It is said that during his stay in Chicago in 1929 he played very much like Sykes prompting Bill Broozy to comment on the semblance. In his autobiography Big Bill Broozy recalls telling Slim, "You ve got a fine style of your own; play, man but like yourself." After this observation Slim changed his style and started playing like Memphis Slim.

Big Bill afterall as Slim admits may be the greatest that he knew. He it was who urged him to "just get you some good musicians to play with you and you'll be Memphis Slim just like I'm Big Bill."

He took the advice and soon enough, way back in the late thirties he was accepted member of the rather exclusive club of big names in the blues world like Boy Williamson, Jazz Gillum, Big Maceo Merriweather, Tampa Red, Washboard Sam and of course Big Bill.

He first started recording in Septem ber, 1939 for Okeh Company through the connection of Lester Melrose. He got another contract with Bluebird and cut "Beer Drinkin' Woman," which was an instant hit.

It may well be that one of his greatest steps was when at age 24 he boarded The Mayflower – the freedom train and headed for Chicago where there were then greater opportunities for most blacks

After the death of Big Bill Broonzy, Memphis Slim formed part of a notable group of blues artists who made waves mainly in Europe and the African continent.

The fact of his visiting Europe in the summer of 1960 may have helped tremendously in impressing him on audiences in Britain.

While in Nigeria this tireless pianist will serve from his hot dish of rhythm and blues great tunes like John Henry and Stackalee. We will also expect to hear Piano Boogie , Someday Baby and Reminiscin' with MS.

Memphis Slim is coming to Nigeria on the invitation of the French Cultural Centre in collaboration with the Jazz Club of Nigeria.

After a late lunch at Naiwu Osahon's come-chop restaurant at Apapa, Memphis Slim will be performing on Thursday, November 12, 1987 at 8.30 p.m. at the Banquet Hall of the Eko Holiday Inn. The outing has been tagged a "One Man Show."

In full flight, fingers rolling, slicing the piano, his voice clear like the chirp chirp of a bird, he cuts the must realistic picture of himself as the greatest living exponent of the art of boogie woogie piano around the world.

And Memphis Slim is always in full flight.

– BUCHI OPENE

Basi & Company:

Popular TV comic-serio series

FOR 30 minutes from 8.30 every Wednesday evening, more than 30 million T.V. viewers sit glued to their T.V. sets to have Dandy's 'a piece of the action.'

The piece of action that sends them reeking with laughter minutes after, is a rehash of their dreams and wishes that they never had the guts to enliven and are happy to watch someone else try them out.

'Basi and Company; no doubt the most popular comic-serio series on T.V. in recent times, is a complete satire on the Nigerian psyche: every one wants to get rich, but few choose to work for it. The fall-out is a dream of schemes to beat any honest means of living in order to strike gold.

According to Mr. Onungwa, the director, "there is a tendency for people to want to make millions without really working for it. We are trying to teach Nigerians that working hard really pays – not lazing around." Basi, the epitome of the dreamy schemes around which the theme of the serial is built, is a smart-alec with very clever and well nourished ideas of how to be a millionaire. But his approach to it is as unconvincing (though ingenious) as his 'to be a millionaire, think like a millionaire'' beazoned in his T-shirt is mere wishful thinking. That is as far as his ideal optimism stretches.

He however never fails to infect his tooge, Alali, with hollow hopes of swimming in golden pools, riding in private planes, sleeping on wide soft beds with the millions rolling in. The anti-thesis of the reality is that he lives in a thread bare single room ironically named the "palace" with an accumulated rent owed to Madam.

At each turn of the play, the question of the power money commands plays up to the surface. Basi wants to be a millionaire and so he things like a millionaire while Madam, the landlady, surfixes each proposal with 'its a matter of cash." Everybody wants cash! Basi and Company expresses a sympathy for this affinity but disagrees with the get-rich-quick mentality of modern Nigerians. Getting rich quick entails cheating, hustling, cunning and duping.

★ *Ken Saro-Wiwa, author of the play.*

The creator of the series, Ken Saro-Wiwa said "I have used it to prop up Nigerian society at the moment. Many rich Nigerians, especially of the politi cal class, have the 'Basi' complex – they are hustling con men."

When a rehash of this elicits rib cracking laughter from viewers, it turns out that they are laughing at themselves. The satirized psyche and sensibilities are a national expression

The seriousness of the moral thrust of the series draws its success in impact from the language. Avoiding the bastardized pidgin English or the ethnic inflections in English that provide quick laughs for comedies in Nigeria, 'Basi and Company' is couched in a level of English language that tranverses the ordinary. The Minister of Information and Culture praised the use of standard English in the play and Saro-Wiwa said 'we.....go for proper English so we can relate to the rest of the world. One reason "Basi" is so popular is that young people are using it to learn English."

If the language acceptance has cut across boundaries to find audience outside Nigeria, it probably would explain why it is watched by a large "audience that cuts across all classes of Nigerian society."

The language factor and the thematic thrust of Basi is a complete deviation from local comedies like 'The new Masquerade', or even 'The New Village Headmaster' that draw laughter with their caricature of ethnic foibles and manner of speech. 'Basi and Company's emphasis is on national foibles and this is where it draws its sympathy and laughter.

Kaodilinye Obiagwu with Dapo Olasebikan

Felix Liberty:

Back from the US with Africa Boy

FELIX Lebarty of Lover Boy fame, breezed into the country from the United States of America two weeks ago, where he had gone to put final touches to his new release, The African Boy.

African Boy, is the fourth in the series of Felix Lebarty's releases since he came to limelight in 1982.

Felix Lebarty, it will be recalled, had earlier released Lover Boy, Che Che, Bobo and right now, African Boy, which according to him, is a take-no-nonsense hit that would project his personality to an all-time global height.

The composition, professional touch, and production are all geared towards putting the African Boy on the launch pad of a Gold disc.

★ *Felix Liberty. In the mood to tune up Nigerians again.*

Felix had earlier won three (3) gold discs and hopes to qualify for another one.

African Boy, according to Felix, is a multi-million dollar hope.

The record will be launched officially on November 21, 1987.

Mass mis-information and credibility

By Adams Aliu

THE last days of last month (October) as well as the first few days of this month (November), provided a good example of how mass communicators could mis-inform, mis-educate and mis-direct peoples' consciences and thereby lose their credibility.

At all times, a journalist's conceptualisation of any news-break, should be nurtured by truth because no amount of sentimentalities can, in the long run, obliterate the logic of solid facts. In my 12-year charged career as a senior journalist (out of which six-and-a-half were spent as a formal trainer of journalists in the second oldest journalism institute in Nigeria), I have always debunked the lazy aphorism "when in doubt, leave out."

This is because when a journalist leaves out this and leaves out that, simply because he is in doubt, what will remain for him to publish? In lieu of that anachronistic maxim therefore, I have always insisted that "when in doubt, check it out."

It is against that postulatory background that my colleagues erred in the discharge of their sacred duties during the last one week or so. Result: readers got more confused (than they were before consulting newspapers). And they silently but grudgingly passed votes of no confidence on the supposedly authoritative' media.

Hear these empirical instances.

The *Triumph*, on its front page issue of October 30, quoting NAN reports, had a headline *"No pay for workers without registration cards!"* Foul. *Radio* and *TV* announcements, later that day, proved the news wrong because no worker at the Lagos State secretariat was denied his pay for failing to produce a registration card.

The *Guardian* of that same day, had a front page story headlined: *"Registration for polls may hold up sanitation."* Quoting government sources for corroboration, it even cited Anambra and Imo states as having rescheduled their monthly cleaning exercises because of LG registration. But the *Statesman* of that very day had a lead front-page story headlined. *"Tomorrow's national clean-up still holds!"*

The *Nigerian Tribune* wrote *"No sanitation exercise tomorrow"* and the *National Concord* also had a shoulder headline: *"Sanitation exercise put off!"*

A reader would obviously wonder which is which and who is mis-informing who because, in the long run, the environmental sanitation exercise still took place on Saturday, October 31.

"Fuel prices rise in January" screamed the front-page lead story of the *Tribune* of October 30. The *Daily Times* of the same day, carried a front-page story headlined: *"Petroleum subsidy on way out!"* And the *Vanguard* yelled in its 72 points upper and lower cases that *"Petrol cost may rise by 250 per cent."* With two tabulated charts to buttress its submission, it had a rider that *". . . FG finally okays petroleum subsidy removal!"* And the paper was categorical that the new fuel prices would come into effect within eight months.

As I write this column, fuel prices remain what they have been. Why then should papers cry wolf just in anticipation of increase in oil prices? Even if it could be so, when is the exact take-off date? Now? January '88? June '88?

Readers are confused.

The public holiday issue was another case in point.

The *Evening Times* of October 30, had its right shoulder carrying *"Monday is holiday."* Quoting the Cabinet Office, Lagos, as its source, it asserted that the clarification of the date was made to it, that morning, in reaction to conflicting reports in some newspapers which claimed that the holiday would be on Tuesday.

The *Guardian Express* on October 30, simply carried an RLB 24-worded statement that Tuesday, November 3, would be a public holiday. And that it was confirmed that morning of October 30. However, it was silent on its source.

Quoting a communique from Abuja categorically, the *National Concord* did not mince words in stating at its front page shoulder, that a release from the office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, said that Tuesday, November 3 would be a public holiday in celebration of *(Maulud-Nabiyi,* the birthday of prophet Mohammed.

The *Voice* of October 31, on its front-page, had a bottomed story headlined. *"Tuesday declared public holiday.* The *Daily Times* on its front page of the same day, had a story titled: *"Sanitation day shelved."* Ditto with the *Daily Sketch.*

In a different colouration, the Airways story came into focus. The *Sunday Sketch* had a front-page lead story: *"3,500 staffers to lose Airways jobs."* Conversely, the *New Nigerian,* in its back-page lead, stated the figure as 300. Ditto with the *Guardian,* etc. There is a world of difference between the figures 3,500 and 300. And one begins to wonder if the editors cross-checked their facts and figures before rushing to press. And in the long run, newspapers later reported on November 3, that only 130 people were sacked. The ultimate result is that readers are thus misinformed.

* * * *

THE *Nigerian Observer* of November 2, made nonsense of quotes and bastardised its usage on page 7. A quote is normally a summary-like paragraph taken from a write-up and featured prominently through its bigger type-face to illuminate and summarise its story. Hear this.

"Many aspiring young men who were unfortunate to have witch (sic) as a wife (sic) had had his (sic) plans of progress. . . ." In grammar, a noun must agree in number, case, gender, voice, etc. with other relevant parts of speech in order to make complete sense. In this case, the plural noun (men) was made to take singular antecedents and pronouns.

* * * *

SAD to say, the Defence Correspondent of *NAN,* Mr. Victor Idem, has been detained by the Military Intelligence for publishing a news story about the recent promotions in the Army. At least, in every material particular, the story has not been denied neither has it been proved false. In fact, those promoted covertly, have since been wearing their new ranks overtly.

Colleague Idem should take, with solace and professional equanmity, the incarceration that has rendered him incommunicado. Afterall, many journalists, hitherto unknown, soon become omniscient, popular, heroic and even *benzy* simply because they have been detained or jailed.

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LAGOS *News* front-page pix of November 2 showing a queue of waiters to be registered, was rather misleading because there were more children than adults on the line. Could it be that they are all voters anxiously waiting to be registered as the caption depicts?

LAST LINE

ANOTHER bi-ennial NUJ convention comes up in less than a fortnight in Maiduguri. For the past decade, I have never missed it for the sake of professional commitment, glamour, camaradere and unionism. Benin (1978); Jos (January '80); Akure (August '80), and Enugu (November '85). As an activist, I remember them all as if it were yesterday. Meanwhile, there are already formations, alignments and re-alignments of like and unlike forces of candidates, of delegates, and of ideas with the result that the pressure of *NUJ* leadership and political atmosphere, is now charged.

Over now to Maiduguri '87. Here, we come.